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THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY FORMS OF BUILDING CONSTRUCTION IN ONTARIO

By John I. Rempel

Part II
General Survey

Harold Shurtleff proves very conclusively that the earliest buildings of the average settler in the United States were frame rather than log, which is quite contrary to popular conception. In the same manner Professor Ramsey Traquaire makes a brief statement to this effect in his book *The Old Architecture of Quebec.* His point is that the buildings were frame or stone, rather than log. Kenneth D. Harrison, supervising architect for the restoration of Port Royal in Nova Scotia, makes the same claim as Professor Traquaire.

We are quite in agreement with both writers provided that their statements are qualified more in detail. On analyzing the type of building on which such arguments are based, we find that these buildings were subsidized either by a government, by wealthy trading companies, or the church. Carpenters, masons, smiths and other artisans were sent out for the express purpose of erecting them. In order to build Port Royal, the following were sent out from France: "Two masterbuilders, a number of carpenters, board sawers, joiners, masons, stone cutters, blacksmiths and locksmiths". In the province of Quebec, the same type of craftsmen were sent out to erect government buildings or buildings for the various churches or orders. At times, the buildings were of a type called "prefabs" in modern vernacular. Ready-cut timbers were shipped to the new land to form the framework. If the buildings had to be moved, the framework was dismantled and re-erected on the new site. Among the men whom Governor Simcoe brought with him to help build his embryo capital were "timbermen from Nova Scotia, expert hewers and dovetailers of logs and Englishmen expert in whipsawing and cutting of joists and rafters". Such buildings, however, were certainly not the houses of the average settler who had to "rough it in the bush". As a matter of fact, most settlers were their own jack-of-all-trades. Therefore, although we agree with the historical claims of the above mentioned writers, we feel that such statements should have been more clearly defined, otherwise it may leave the impression that all buildings were stone or frame rather than log. It is beyond argument that the first type of shelter of the early settlers were log houses; probably not even a structure pretentious enough to be called a "house"—a shanty would be more to the point. There is so much evidence to this effect that it is useless to quote it at any great length to prove the point. It is true that the log house was in a great many cases only a transitory means of protection from the weather until

such time as the settler could afford a better one such as frame, stone or brick, depending on the building material most readily available in the district and the means at his disposal. Nevertheless, the log house came first in most cases.

For fear of labouring the point, we shall give only a few references by better known Canadians of the pioneer days of Ontario. Mrs. Traill writes in one of her letters how well she can recall the family group in their primitive log house. However, after twenty years, the original log house was in such a bad state of repair that they decided to build a frame house which was erected in due course with the usual raising bee for the framework.

Young Strickland built his log house near Peterborough in 1832. He built it all himself, including the chimney of which he was justifiably proud. When lightning struck it some years afterwards, he replaced it by a frame house on a stone foundation. The fact that he mentions a stone foundation for the second house indicates that the first one probably did not have one, and the logs must have rested on the bare ground.

John Langton writes about coming home (his first log house) one winter evening in 1833-34 and finding his servant boy having fled to the "choppers" for protection. This was before the introduction of a door into his "Establishment". A curtain served as a door, and his boy probably became frightened by some wild animals roaming about his shanty.

We must not assume, however, that all log houses were of a temporary nature. There is ample evidence to the contrary. Some of the larger houses were definitely built for permanence. Such was the case of the Steele residence, 1833; John Langton's second house, 1837; the Smith home near Edgeley, a full two-storey house built about 1809; the Samuel Frazer home near Midland, 1855; and countless others. There is an interesting story connected with the Frazer home which, as an aside, throws a very revealing light on the character of the pioneers. Samuel Frazer, a nephew of Michael Macdonnell, who was private secretary to Lord Selkirk of the Hudson's Bay Company, fell in love with an eighteen year old girl, Amelia Jeffery, daughter of a Midland family. Samuel intended to build the best and most modern house in the district, worthy of his love. He did most of the work himself, used the best materials and workmanship. No expense was spared, and it required eight hundred panes of glass to fill the windows. However, in all his planning he completely missed one point. He was Anglican and his love was brought up as a staunch Presbyterian. On the wedding day Samuel drove up to the bride's home to take her to the Anglican church for the wedding ceremony. Amelia insisted that she be married by a Presbyterian minister, to which Samuel replied that he would not consider himself married if that were the case. The result was that Samuel got back into his buggy and drove off. For years afterwards nobody lived in the house. For some

time it was rented to tenants, but it was not kept in good repair and finally was abandoned completely. A bank manager in Midland bought the house for several hundred dollars and spent another fifteen thousand to renovate it. Now it stands on the brow of a hill at the approach to Midland, one of the best preserved log houses of its kind in the province.

There are a considerable number of log houses near Penetanguishene, Lafontaine and Lefevre's Corner, which were built at a relatively late date, certainly in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and at a time when there were ample building materials available other than logs. All these houses are of excellent workmanship, well proportioned, carefully planned, and built for permanence without any doubt.

It is physically impossible to arrange log houses in Ontario in a chronological order because pioneering went on for a period of about fifty years. In 1795 the Hon. William Dickson, merchant of Niagara, asked for more land from Governor Simcoe, stating that he, William Dickson, had erected the first brick house in the province. (This petition was allowed on July 6th, 1796. Petition No. 56.)[1] While Dickson built his brick house, the Scaddings, Playters and Coons settled at the mouth of the Don river, and John Scadding built his "neat" log cabin. In 1818 D'Arcy Boulton built his beautiful brick house, now The Grange, in Toronto; Chief Justice Campbell built his brick residence on Duke Street in 1822, both houses of the highest order of design. Eleven years later, in 1833, while London consisted of three hundred houses and boasted two newspapers, the *Sun* and the *Advocate*, the Radcliffes pioneered in Adelaide, a few miles removed from London. In Kincardine Township pioneering went on as late as 1851, while at the same time Toronto had produced such beautiful buildings as the Bank of Upper Canada on Frederick Street, and the Normal School on Gould Street, and Cobourg had the Upper Canada Academy, supposedly the finest building in Upper Canada at that time. Consequently there is no attempt made to have the examples cited here in their proper order of appearance. As far as dates of erection are concerned, they may vary widely. They are only quoted to show methods of construction or to illustrate some structural feature.

Wood has been the favourite building material since time immemorial, and since the early settlers were surrounded by an unlimited supply of it, they would, of course, make the most of it. A great many settlers were quite convinced of the superiority of American timber over that of Europe, although it was admitted that the American yellow pine was not as durable as the red pine of Norway, except that it was more adapted for certain purposes. What these purposes were is not stated. However, both sides agreed that the pitch pine, red pine and larch would last as long as any European lumber of the same kind. Certainly larch

1. *The Correspondence of Lieut. Governor John Graves Simcoe . . . .* Ed. by E. A. Cruishank. (5 vols., Toronto, Ontario Historical Society, 1923-31), V, 203.

logs were used frequently as the base logs in houses since they were supposed to be the least affected by dampness. Outside of cedar, hemlock was considered the most durable wood. It was also thought to possess the peculiar quality of preserving iron driven into it from rusting, whether under water or exposed to the air. In order to get established all a settler had to do was to pay about £20 for his claim, own a few tools, hire several "choppers" and a yoke of oxen, select the spot where the house was to be and go to work. Logs were cut to length and drawn to the spot in the clearing where the house was to stand, where they were notched and laid. There is quite a variation of workmanship in evidence. In some instances the logs have been selected with great care as to the diameter, since the same size log made the cornering so much neater and easier. Others show very careless selection and very poor workmanship. In some instances even warped logs have been used as shown in the Rama Reserve log house.

The type of construction and size of the house of the early settler would, of course, depend on the means at his disposal. This was in the form of either private funds, government aid in various degrees, or company assistance. The Irish settlers around Enniskillen were well supplied with food and grain by the government. In addition, they received: 1 axe, 1 handsaw, 1 hammer, 100 nails, and 2 gimlets. Since nothing is said about glass, we must assume that windows were absent. In Smith township, approximately ten miles east of the Irish settlement across Chemong Lake, the English were very prosperous, in spite of practically no help from the government.

The disbanded 99th regiment settled around Richmond, south of Ottawa. Assistance was given for the first year. Among the items which were supplied to the soldiers to be noted especially are: one pound of putty, twelve panes of glass, and twelve pounds of nails. By inference, this would indicate two sashes of six panes each. On an average, the minimum assistance, with respect to building tools, consisted of one hammer, some nails, and four small window panes. Nails and hardware were precious items for the settler. In Virginia the settler burned his home in order to salvage the nails from the ashes before moving on. This habit was so widespread that the Government offered to supply the settler with nails to the same amount as his house was estimated to contain provided that the house was not burned.

A certain minimum of tools was required for building. The Radcliffes in Adelaide near London recommended 2 axes, 3 iron wedges, 2 two-inch screw augers, with all other sizes down to one-half inch, jack, smoothing, and trying planes, hammer and hatchet, one brace and a set of bits, one handsaw, and one set of chisels in four sizes. In some cases, a "whip-saw" was brought along. Such a saw cost about five dollars and two men could cut from 250 to 300 feet in a day. An exceptional day's

cut would run as high as 400 feet. In 1621 the following list of tools was recommended:[2]

Five broad howes at 2s a piece
Five narrow howes at 16s a piece
Two broad axes at 3s 8d a piece
Five felling axes at 18d a piece
Two steele hand-sawes at 16d a piece
Two two-hand-sawes at 5s a piece
One whip-saw, set and filed with boxe, file and wrest - 10s
Two hammers 12d a piece
Two augers 6d a piece
Six chissels 6d a piece
Two percers stocked 4d a piece
Three gimblets 2d a piece
Two hatchets 21d a piece
Two froves to cleave pale 18d
Two hand-bils 20d a piece
One grindlestone 4s
Nails of all sorts to the value of £

This, of course, is too extensive a list of articles for the average settler. In 1833, the Radcliffes advised friends to bring all possible tools from England because they were cheaper over there than in Canada, also more plentiful.

The general impression has always been to the effect that the tools manufactured in England were superior to those made in America. However, this certainly could not apply to all tools manufactured. The emphasis and importance of certain tools certainly shifted when the settler arrived at his chosen parcel of land and literally had to carve a living out of the bush. The axe was one such tool. The axe is a coarse tool and is one of the first implements used during the developmental stage of a skill. As skill is increased, the tools are refined to meet the new standards of accuracy and refinement. Thus, the early tool loses significance and importance. English craftsmen had passed the axe stage. Consequently, there was not as much care and attention paid to the manufacture of it as there was to other tools.

As early as 1768 Sir Guy Carleton remarked, in connection with the St. Maurice forge near Three Rivers that, "There is not much Iron Manufactured here, but for the most common uses, and Edge Tools, Axes and Hatchets, for the Consumption of the Country, and Indian Markets, this being an article in which the British manufactures have not hitherto been able to hit on the taste of the native or consequently the wants of the Traders."

One of John Graves Simcoe's requisitions dated September 21, 1793,[3] confirms this fact. He writes: "The axes are to be made of the best material and of the shape and size of the pattern sent. The Axe will then weigh rather more than five pounds but should it be found to be less, it must be increased to that weight, preserving still the same proportion.

Particular Attention must be given to the tempering of the Steel without which the Axe will be of no value as in the case of those already sent over. The little attention given to this particular in England has already deprived her of a great part of the manufactury of edge tools

2. Harold Shurtleff, *The Log Cabin Myth*, (Harvard, 1939).
3. *Correspondence of Lieut. Governor John Graves Simcoe*, II, 66.

and will eventually deprive her of the whole. Those made in America, tho' not so neatly fabricated are of infinite more value to the several persons who use them. It is customary with the Manufacturers in America to warrant the Quality of the tools they make for six months, and take back or replace those that are found to be unsufficient.

This ought to be adopted in England."

A week later, on September 28, he wrote to Evan Nepean:

"The axes sent to this Country are so carelessly fabricated as to be totally incompetent to any Service whatever. Those which are constructed in the Country sell at least for two Dollars at Niagara and increase in Price in proportion to the demand—but should they not be of prime quality, I shall be obliged to purchase them in this Country. I have therefor thought proper to have a model made, which should be exactly attended to."

Simcoe's hope for improved manufacture of edge tools, especially axes and saws, was certainly slow in materializing. Forty years after his advice, John McGregor in 1833, referring to the axe, said, "this tool has not yet been manufactured in England, in the form or temper which long experience has proved the best. A good chopper will do treble the work with an American made axe than he could with an English made one. Neither have we yet manufactured any mill-saws equal to those made in Philadelphia; for the greater number of those used in New Brunswick are smuggled from the United States, although they cost double the price paid for mill-saws in England."

Tools and hardware in general were in short supply for quite a long time. Apparently this shortage was not confined to small towns only. In April 1811, Sheriff Beikie reported that the local jail in York (Toronto) required repairs very badly. The order to have this done was given in May, but it was discovered that the necessary spikes could not be obtained in York. They were finally obtained on special orders from the Lieutenant-Governor and it was only in July that carpenter Leach was able to commence the work.

When the Langtons wanted some putty, they had to order it from Peterborough. If by some unfortunate circumstance the boat which carried such supplies became stranded because of rough weather, it would hold up necessary repairs for a considerable time. Local supply also depended on cargo ships from England. If a ship got lost, it would be as long as one whole year before another load would arrive, since most ships made, on an average, only two trips per year.

Since fire was probably the greatest hazard for wooden structures and since property values were even in the earliest days determined greatly by environment, by-laws were established very early in Upper Canada. Richard Cartwright,[4] who did not always see eye to eye with Simcoe, wrote the following to Isaac Todd on October 14, 1793:

4. J. A. Roy, *Kingston, The King's Town*, (Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, 1952), 45.

. . . you will smile when I tell you that even at York, a town lot is to be granted in the front street only on condition that you shall build a house of not less than forty-seven feet frontage, two stories high, and after a certain order of architecture. In the second street, they may be somewhat less in front, but the two stories and the mode of architecture are indispensible; and it is only on the back street and alleys that the tinkers and taylors will be allowed to consult their taste and circumstances in the structure of their habitations, upon lots on one-tenth of an acre . . . ."

Simcoe also made the stipulation that if the owner did not build within three years, the land reverted to the crown. Along Longwood (near London) and Talbot Roads, shingles were required. Between 1820-40, the by-law along Dundas Road required a "reasonably well constructed log house . . . " with the minimum dimensions of 16'-0" by 20'-0".

Like all other by-laws, they were not always observed, or at least, stretched to the limit. On September 6, 1800, the following order was issued in York:

The Lieutenant Governor's Office, 4th of September, 1800. Whereas, several persons claim to hold lots in the Town of York, and have not performed the condition of building thereon within the time limited; and whereas, the health and convenience of His Majesty's subjects resident in the said Town demand that the ground parts of the same should be cleared as soon as possible:

Notice is hereby given to all such persons that they are required within three months from this date to cut and burn all the brush or underwood on their lots; and within six months from the date thereof to fell all trees that are standing thereon, on pain of their said lots being forfeited.

James Green, Secretary.

In September 1840 John Langton built a workshop which had to be 66'-0" away from his main building because of fire regulations.

The complexity and size of log construction was in the order of a "hut" of branches or boughs in some cases, next the "shanty", the "round log" house followed, and finally the "neat" log house of squared logs and careful workmanship. The wall height of the earlier houses was generally eight logs high which was later increased to eleven. Frequently the wall height above the ceiling was increased enough to allow for a sleeping loft or "loom room" as it was sometimes called. The vertical part of the main wall above the first floor ceiling, before the roof slope begins, is called a "knee wall" and it was from two to four feet high. But we must remember that the above order contained a great many exceptions, as shown by just three examples:

John Scadding's cabin, 1794—nine logs high, squared logs
Victoria Park house, 1810-1815—eleven logs high, round
John Galt's house and office, 1827—probably ten logs high, round

Shanties were the most contracted habitation which could properly be called a shelter. They were about twelve feet wide by twenty feet

long, with a wall height of eight feet or the equivalent of eight logs. Two men, handy with an axe, could put one up in two days. A shanty had just two openings, one for the door and one in the roof to permit the smoke to escape. In his *Travels in North America*, 1827-1828, Basil Hall states that he had contracted with two men to have his house built. This was to be thirteen logs high or the equivalent in feet, twenty feet wide and twenty-eight feet long. Shingles were to be used and the gable ends boarded up. About one acre was to be cleared in order to make the house safe from falling trees. The house was to have one door in the middle. The size of this house was larger than the usual one of this type and, since no windows are mentioned, it was probably an oversized shanty.

Dimensions for a shanty mentioned previously, must have been common because they occur frequently. Other dimensions mentioned are eighteen feet wide by twenty-five feet long. The walls are chinked with "slats and moss" and roofed with "wooden troughs". The interpretation of the wooden troughs for roofing is quite clear. This consisted of halved cedar logs hollowed out and laid alternately with the trough up and inverted as shown by C. W. Jefferys.[5] Slats and moss chinking was used probably only in connection with round logs since they required more chinking material than squared ones. The log house at Shanty Bay serves as an illustration of this method.

Probably as good a description as any of the general procedure of building an average log house is given by John McGregor.[6]

> The habitations which the new settlers first erect are constructed in the rudest manner. Round logs, from fifteen to twenty feet long, are laid horizontally over each other, and notched in at the corners to allow them to come along the walls within about an inch of each other. One is first laid on each side to begin the walls, then one at each end, and the building is raised in this manner by a succession of logs crossing and binding each other at the corners, until seven or eight feet high. The seams are closed with moss or clay; three or four rafters are then raised to support the roof, which is covered with boards, or with the rinds of birch or spruce trees, bound down with poles tied together with withes. A wooden framework placed on a stone foundation is raised a few feet from the ground, and leading through the roof its sides closed up with clay and straw kneaded together, forms a chimney. A space large enough for a door, and another for a window, is then cut through the walls; and in the centre of the cabin a square pit or cellar is dug, for the purpose of preserving potatoes or other vegetables during the winter. Over this pit a floor of boards, or of logs hewn flat on the upper side, is laid, and another overhead to form a sort of garret. When a door is hung, a window-sash with six or more panes of glass is fixed, and a cupboard and two or three bedstocks put up; the habitation is then considered ready to receive the new settler and his family. Although such a dwelling has nothing attractive in its appearance, unless it be its rudeness, yet

5. C. W. Jeffreys, *Picture Gallery of Canadian History*, (3 vols., Toronto, Ryerson, 1942-50), II, 30.

6. John McGregor, *British America*, 2nd ed. (London, 1833), 557.

it is by no means so uncomfortable a lodging as the habitations of the poor peasantry in Ireland, and in some parts of England and Scotland. New settlers who have means build much better houses at first, with two or more rooms; but the majority of emigrants live for a few years in habitations similar to the one here described.

One fact which is mentioned frequently is the necessity of setting the shanty or cabin in a well-cleared spot in order to protect the occupants from falling trees. This is also mentioned in the Radcliffe Letters.[7] To prove the importance of this, they tell of an instance where one of their friends was enjoying a quiet, peaceful rest one afternoon when a tree came crashing down, flattening the house along with the occupant. Fortunately, the owner was not badly hurt.

It is difficult to estimate the actual number of log houses still in existence in Ontario. Up-to-date figures are not available. The last census returns which differentiate "wood" houses into shanties, log and frame were taken in 1861. For some reason the next building census was not taken until 1891, and here all houses are divided into four groups: wood, brick, stone, and "others". By "others" are probably meant those of mud or concrete, because the latter was making its appearance as a building material at about this time. Since these figures are very early ones, they do not give any clue as to the actual number at the present time. However, it is interesting to note in passing the percentages for the townships of Erin and Caledon in 1851 and 1861. Here log houses definitely outnumbered all other forms of construction, and also that the actual number increased over that of the previous ten years even though the percentage in relation to the total number of houses declined.

TABLE I

(Extracts from Census Returns of Houses in Ontario)
(Courtesy Dept. of Planning and Development, Prov. of Ontario)

		1851		1861	
Township	Type	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Toronto	Shanties	89	7.7		
	Log	367	31.8	248	24.0
	Others	698	60.5	785	76.0
	Total	1154	100.0	1033	100.0
Chinguacousy	Shanties	87	7.3		
	Log	672	58.2	496	46.4
	Others	398	34.5	574	53.6
	Total	1157	100.0	1070	100.0

7. *Authentic Letters from Upper Canada*, ed. by the Rev. Thomas Radcliff, (Toronto, Macmillan, 1953), 16.

Esquesing	Shanties	4	.2		
	Log	378	47.4	290	31.7
	Others	415	52.4	624	68.3
	Total	797	100.0	914	100.0
Caledon	Shanties	34	7.9		
	Log	340	79.	427	66.4
	Others	56	13.1	217	33.6
	Total	430	100.0	644	100.0
Erin	Shanties	20	3.4		
	Log	428	73.3	488	63.2
	Others	136	23.3	285	36.8
	Total	584	100.0	773	100.0

* Since we are only interested in the ratio of log houses to any other form of construction, such dwellings have been combined under "others". This is not so in the original census, as mentioned previously. However, there must have been a considerable number in the province because the returns for Upper Canada in 1831 list 14,297 dwelling-houses of a superior kind, and in 1832 a total of 42,857 dwellings of all descriptions. Since frame, brick and stone were of a superior kind, and since there were probably no houses of this type old enough to be classed as inferior, we must assume that the remaining 28,560 inferior type of houses were mostly of log construction. If this is correct, then the overall ratio of log houses to any other kind was about two to one. This was true as late as 1851 in some townships such as Erin, Caledon and Chinguacousy.

The earliest returns of construction are probably those for the town of York for the years 1807, 1808 and 1809. (See Table II.) This table shows an increase of over twenty-five percent of log houses in 1809 over the year 1807. On March 6, 1834 York was incorporated as the city of Toronto and according to the assessment roll of June of the same year it appears that by this time there were only nine log houses left within the city limits.

TABLE II

(Extracts from York's Assessment Roll for June 1834)

YEAR	Town Lots	Round Logs *	Square Timber One Storey	Additional Fireplaces	Square Timber Two Storeys	Additional Fireplaces	Frame under two storeys	Additional Fireplaces	Stills	Billiard Tables
1807	131	19	6	8	15	38	55	52	60	—
1808	132	21	4	15	20	44	52	40	58	2
1808	172	14	11	37	27	64	55	58	58	2

* No additional fireplaces are mentioned for this type because these were houses of the poorer citizens who could not afford the expense of another fireplace as well as the extra tax which every additional fireplace entailed.

For some reason no frame houses are mentioned of two storeys in height. We included the number of stills and billiard tables purely for atmosphere and an indication of a scale of values in those years. These statistics do not give an accurate picture of the actual number of log buildings since they exclude any other buildings such as log barns, fodder storage, sheds, etc. In all areas except where Pennsylvania Dutch settled with their huge banked barns, the usual outbuildings or "offices" were generally one two-bay center-door log barn. As the need for increased storage arose, other log buildings were added. These were invariably rather small, self-contained units.

In 1837 Mrs. Jameson wrote in her diary concerning Col. Talbot's establishment, "around the house stands a variety of outbuildings of all imaginable shapes and sizes, and disposed without the slightest regard for order or symmetry." This is very typical of farms settled by English, Scots or Irish colonists. The farm of Eric Salter on Pinery Road near Franktown contains eleven such outbuildings.

Log construction was not necessarily confined to settlers' houses. When Sir Peregrine Maitland visited Peterborough on February 11, 1826, the Government House was a "spacious log house". Log taverns are mentioned too frequently to leave any doubt about their existence. Many towns and villages consisted of log constructed buildings only. In 1833, Barrie consisted of a log bakery, two log taverns, one of which was also a store, and a log farmhouse. In 1826, London consisted of three hundred houses mostly of logs with only a few more pretentious frame structures. The only outstanding building was the District Courthouse, built in Gothic style of brick and stucco. The jail was of logs, consisting of cells at the rear of the building made doubly secure by a row of logs driven vertically into the ground against the outside walls. The front of the building was the courtroom, and upstairs was a schoolroom.

The average log house could be built in three to four weeks at an approximate cost of £35. Some settlers paid as much as £50 but that seems to be somewhat out of line. The cost for the twenty-eight log houses for the Queen's Rangers at the West Landing (Niagara) averages about £33:10, which may be considered an average price since these barracks were 10' wide by 20' long. The breakdown of the cost of these log barracks is clearly shown in the estimate of the expenses in the appendix.

In the actual construction process the walls were put together first, disregarding any openings for doors and windows. These were cut in afterwards with an axe or a cross-cut saw. A separate charge for this was frequently made. According to tender #2 the Hon. Peter Russell had to pay four shillings for each opening cut into his log house. In tender #3 the charge for cutting the logs, making and installing the door was £1:16, and £1:18 for a window. The gable ends were then

boarded up and the whole structure covered with a "shed or pent-house" roof. The name shed or pent-roof was a popular misnomer for a gable roof among the early settlers. The roof could be made weatherproof in several ways. One method was to split cedar, bass wood or black ash trunks, hollow them out, lay them in the manner of Spanish tiles, alternately with the hollow up and down, as mentioned previously. The name of "pent roof" probably has its origin from the areas in America which were settled by German immigrants because this type of roof is a typical feature of German and Swiss houses. It is not a roof as such, but a continuous porch roof between the first and second storey. It was in the nature of a wide overhanging cornice. Originally it was used to protect the log or mud brick walls from the effect of rain. It was retained on later brick and frame houses when it was no longer a necessity. A pent roof ran around the whole house or else across the gable ends or sides only.

The roof pitch varied from 35 to 45 degrees with the average about 40 degrees. Bark or shingles were also used very frequently. Up to the present time we have come across only one reference to clapboard being used for roofing in Ontario. This describes a school house in Middlesex County as of "round logs, fourteen feet by sixteen feet with CLAPBOARD roof. . . . "[8]

The size of the logs varied greatly but the average lies between eight and eleven inches. In the Dawes Road log house, the diameter of the logs is as follows, counting from the bottom up:

10", 11", 10", 9", 10", 8", 11", 8", 9", 8", 11".

The logs in John Scadding's cabin show about the same variation:

8", 9", 10", 11", 11", 10", 10", 8".

Depending on the type of keying, tie-logs were used to prevent the walls from bulging out with the constant movement of the soil during winter freeze-up and summer's thaw. A tie-log was generally placed fairly high up in the wall and the seventh or eighth log would most likely be the one selected. This was not necessary where proper dovetailing was used, but in common round notching or lap-keying a tie-log was a necessity. John Langton argued against a house of too long proportions because of the difficulty of obtaining tie-logs long enough for the purpose. The round logs in a log house near Claremont are somewhat larger in size. They vary from eighteen to twenty inches in diameter. The taper of the keys is almost imperceptible as if they were tapered by accident rather than design. This would necessitate a tie-log, and such a log is found to be about the seventh one from the bottom and it has a proper dovetail key. In this instance, the ties are across the ends. In the Dawes Road house the eighth or ninth log serves as a tie-log across the front and rear.

8. Henry, L. J., and Paterson, Gilbert, *Pioneer Days in Ontario*, (Toronto, Ryerson, 1938), 147.

The spaces between the logs were chinked or "stubbed" with wooden wedges, stones, branches or just plain straw mixed with mud or clay. The less care one exercised in the selection of the logs as to diameter, the more chinking one would have to do. In order to save on chinking, small branches were at times laid along the joints as shown in the example at Shanty Bay. In Pennsylvania construction the chinking was very carefully worked in as mentioned previously. The inside of the wall face was either left rough, squared in a rough sort of fashion, covered with vertical boarding, or in some instances "plaistered".

There was an interesting example of unusual log construction near Shanty Bay on Lake Simcoe. Unfortunately, this was demolished in 1954. The interesting part about this log house was the size and arrangement of the logs. Generally logs of twenty-four inches in diameter or larger would not be used in the round, probably because of the large amount of chinking required to fill the joints. Twenty-four inch logs as such are not uncommon, but as a rule they were used in squared form. In the Shanty Bay house such large diameter logs are used at the bottom with the size diminishing toward the top. In order to save on chinking, branches were laid between the joints before the chinking was applied. Two types of keying were also used. The bottom logs have a peculiar wedge-shaped key with the wedge upward, while the top logs have the usual round notching. The house was almost square in plan with a hipped roof, that is, a roof sloping in on all four sides. Both features are most uncommon for log houses. The indications also are that it had both French doors and windows, which would indicate that the owner was a person of taste or means, or both. The peculiar combination of such unusual features indicates that it was built in this manner either on the insistence of the owner or that it was just a builder's "fancy".

Some writers are inclined to think that the presence of a sawmill automatically signified the end of the log house. This may be true in some districts. However, log houses demanded sawn lumber to quite an extent. At first the floor was of "cleft" planks, smoothed with an adze, and pinned to logs laid on the ground. One of the late pioneers recalls an old log inn as having

> the floor of loose split logs, hewn into some approach to evenness with an adze; the walls of log entire, filled in the interstices with chips of pine, which, however, did not prevent an occasional glimpse of the object visible outside, and had the advantage, moreover, of rendering a window unnecessary; the hearth was the bare soil, the ceiling slabs of pine wood, the chimney a square hole in the roof . . . .

As soon as a whip-saw was acquired or a sawmill was erected near by, such floorboards were cut rather than cleft. The windows and doors also required sawn lumber. At the beginning, these were assembled on the job. Later they could be obtained ready-made from a mill. One reason why log houses persisted for so long was that they were exempt from taxes if they contained only one fireplace.

The size of a log house varied greatly depending on the means at the settler's disposal. The size of 16'-0" by 20'-0" required by the Dundas Road by-laws was the minimum. From this size upward the only limit outside of means was the size of timber available or the desire of the owner. The Stewarts built a log house near Peterborough in 1823 which measured twenty-eight feet wide and forty-two feet long. The honours for probably the largest log houses should go to Captain Elmes Steele in Fairvalley and Samuel de Burgh Frazer, near Midland. The house of Captain Steele was about eighty feet long but only of one storey in height, while Samuel Frazer's was about forty-two feet long but of two full stories. The former was erected in 1833 while the latter was built in 1855.

However, from Table III it is quite evident that the preferred size was 16' x 20'-0". It is true that the figures were obtained mostly for Markham and York Townships, with a few from Pickering and Whitchurch, but we believe that they are quite representative for the rest of the province. We must not assume that the number of houses registered were the only ones built during the years shown in the table. The number quoted are only those for which settlement certificates were available.

TABLE III

Number and size of log houses according to available certificates of settlement or application of ownership for the Townships of Markham, York, Pickering and Whitchurch. For some unknown reason, no figures are available for the year 1814 and also prior to 1802.

Size	1802	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	15	Total
L W														
16 x 16									1					1
16 x 18	1	1			1				1			7		11
†16 x 20	2	5	5	5		2	2	2		1	2		1	27
16 x 22	1	1												2
18 x 18			1		1		1							3
18 x 20			1		1	1	1						1	5
*18 x 22	1			3										4
18 x 24	1			1										2
18 x 26													1	1
20 x 20			2											2
20 x 24				1	1									2
20 x 26					1		1							2
20 x 28		1												1
20 x 30			1											1
14 x 26	1													1
15 x 30		1												1
	7	9	10	10	5	3	5	2	2	1	1	7	3	66

†—This number includes two houses marked 15 x 20, probably by mistake.
*—This number includes one house marked 17 x 21 which are probably inside dimensions.

All lands were given under certain restrictions which varied to some extent, depending on the district. Generally, the settler had to clear a minimum number of acres, open a road in front of his lot and build a house of certain dimensions. Such settling duties, if performed within twelve or eighteen months after the location ticket had been issued, entitled the immigrant to a deed from the Government which made the lot his forever. Some of these location tickets bore rather quaint descriptions of the houses. John Clendenning, yeoman of Markham, bought lot 17 in the 8th concession in October 1803 and "built upon the same a good house of hewed and Doughtailed Logs". Some built "a long house", others a "sufficient log house", while others simply built a "good dwelling house".

The small cabins would, of course, have no ceiling. If ceiling joists were used, the space under the roof was used as storage. Ceiling joists invariably spanned the full width of the house and the ends generally rested on the sixth or seventh log, depending on the diameter of the trunks. The most common way of seating the ends of the joists in the wall was either a squared end fitting into a square notch cut on the log carrying the joists, or the top of the ends were cut wedge-shaped to fit into the proper groove cut into the under side of the log resting immediately on the joist ends. The houses at Beaverton and at Dawes Road are good examples of either method. The ceiling joists were either round or square in a rough way. The ceiling height was generally seven feet. Mr. Pople's cottage, Penetanguishene, has a ceiling height of only 6' 8" to the underside of the loft floor, and since the ceiling joists are below the floor the clear head room is barely 6' 0". Captain Spark's cottage in Toronto was "barely" seven feet, and in the Dawes Road log house, due to settling and buckling, the ceiling was only 6' 6" at the rear and 7' 0" at the front. The size of the ceiling joists varied greatly, the most common one for a round joist being in the neighbourhood of eight inches, and for a squared one about five inches by seven inches. The selection of joists was frequently most irregular. In the Dawes Road house the sizes of the ceiling joists were as follows:

8" x 6", 4" x 7", 4½" x 6", 5½" x 7", 5" x 6", 5" x 5", 6" x 5".

The spacing of the joists also varies considerably, from a maximum of about eight feet down to three feet. Generally the spaces were fairly evenly divided, but again, there sems to have been no attempt made at a reasonably even spacing. The spacing of the joists in the Dawes Road house was as follows: 4-0", 4'-3", 4'-0", 3'-9", 3'-3", 4'-0", 4'-0", 3'-0", 3'-6", 2'-0". The spacing in a house at Oxford Mills was: 5'-10", 3'-7", 3'-9", 4'-3", and 3'-8". The spacing of the ceiling joists in the C. Stong house at Edgeley are equally as irregular: 3'-8", 2'-8", 2'-8¼", 2'-7", 2'-10",

2'-10", 2'-10¾", 3'-0", 2'-11¾", 2'-11", 3'-0½", 3'-1". In the last two cases the left large end space was the stair end of the house.

The problem of cornering was generally quite easily solved provided the same diameter logs were used. Several methods of keying are shown. The most common one is the round notching of round logs with the ends projecting at the corners. Several variations were developed from these, the most carefully worked out method is the so-called dovetailing with squared logs. This made a very tight-fitting corner and was used invariably in military construction later. Carelessness in the selection of logs of necessity produced careless cornering. There is considerable evidence to this effect. This apparent lack of care may be due in a great many instances to the ignorance of the settlers in matters of construction because not everyone was a skilled tradesman. As a matter of fact, a great many settlers knew more about Greek and Latin than about building houses.

Settlers heartily disliked the annoying tendency of the log house to dry and shrink over a period of years, with the consequent warping and twisting of all openings to windward. In modern construction, we demand properly seasoned lumber either seasoned outdoors, a process which takes twelve or more months to be completed properly, or kiln-dried. A settler's house took not more than one month from the time the trees were felled to the completion of the house. Rot in the bottom logs due to constant exposure to alternately wetting and drying was the common cause of settling. In America, larch logs were frequently used as foundation logs because they were not supposed to be affected by moisture as much as other woods. Shrinking and warping was extensive, considering the amount of lumber contained in a log house. The writer was cited one instance where a log house was torn down, the logs sawn into boards of perfectly sound pine up to twenty-four inches in width. Six thousand feet of lumber were salvaged, sufficient to frame several bungalows.

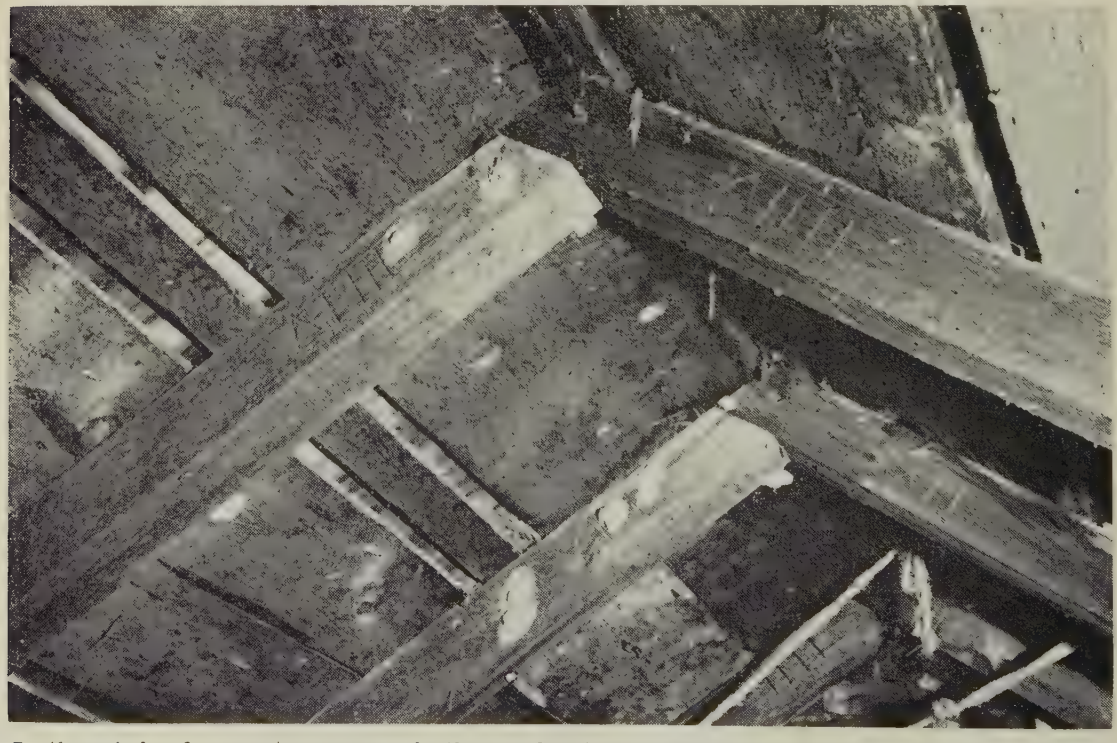
An excellent example of careless log work and the use of twisted logs may still be seen at Rama Indian Reserve on Lake Couchiching. It is a small shed belonging to a farm house which is also of logs. Both buildings have been moved and rebuilt lately. The shed is of round logs and the twisted logs are in the end wall. Both houses were probably built prior to 1838, because the Reserve was established at this date and it is known that white settlers had farmed the land prior to this.

Glass was expensive and in most cases difficult to procure. Since all available glass had to come from England or America, small panes were generally preferred. We find numerous references to glass sizes of about seven inches wide by nine inches high. Glass was generally about one-twentieth of an inch in thickness. However, this was not at all uniform. In some panes of glass we found a varying thickness of from .042" - .073". William Canniff in his *History of the Province of Ontario*, 1872, mentions windows of four lights each, each pane seven inches wide

The Smith home near Edgeley. It was built in 1808 and is still being lived in. It is in an excellent state of preservation. A nice touch of design is the pair of quarter-round gable windows. Unfortunately the original sash have been replaced by later ones. The size and spacing of the windows give it a resemblance of a garrison house of the early new-Englander.

First School House in Waterloo built in 1820. Note the size of the logs and the typical keying. This building has been well looked after and is in a fair state of preservation.

This shows a typical Pennsylvania-Dutch keying detail. Note the peculiar wedge-shaped notching. This detail is from the Waterloo school house built in 1820.



In the minds of a great many people the word "pioneer" is synonymous with discomfort and crudeness. This is not necessarily the case. After all, craftsmen came over from the various countries who were highly skilled and well-trained. They had to work under a handicap at times. However, the workmanship they produced is in many instances equal to the best on the continent.

Note the identification marks at the top of the rafters. All joints were first matched and marked on the ground before setting them in place.

This jail was built in 1870 at Silver Islet near Port Arthur. For detailed description see text. Note the careful selection of logs and the fine keying at the corners. The cells were at the rear.

This is a church in Wallenstein near Elmira. It is a beautifully proportioned building. Note the six-panel door and the classical wave-pattern in the cornice.

This is probably one of the most typical pioneer log cabins. It has all the elements and attributes of the drama of pioneer life. It possesses an emotional quality to a high degree. It is well-proportioned. The door is only 5'-6" high. It contains the original stone fireplace and chimney, the original pine panelling and a stair to the loft. It is the McIlraith home near Hopetown, built about 1840.

This is a typical two-bay barn of the early settler other than Pennsylvania-Dutch. Such barns are considerably smaller than their Pennsylvania-Dutch counterpart. Therefore one can expect to find several such buildings on larger farms where increased storage demanded it.

and nine deep. It was not only glass that was difficult to procure. Unless doors and windows were made on the spot, they had to be brought in from some distant mill and that caused at times great hardship. One old pioneer recalled that her grandmother had to use a blanket over the door to ward off bears and wolves, because the door had not yet arrived. Mrs. Strickland recalled the very trying trip through the woods to her newly acquired land, but when she got there, she found the house in a very unfinished state, and the doors had not yet been hung nor any partitions built. Where the chimney was to be, there was just a large gaping hole in the roof because the frost was so intense that it had stopped all masonry work and thus the chimney had been left half completed. In the *Reminiscences of Early Settlers*, (Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute, 1911), an early log school is described as "rough, cold, dark and dismal, with but two windows of six panes of six by nine each." The window openings of the Dawes Road log house suggest double-hung windows, two sash of six panes each with the usual glass size of seven inches by nine inches.

The type of window most commonly used was the so-called double-hung. This type was in common use throughout Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is no more airtight than the so-called casement window, but it is more weatherproof. Generally, the panes were of a size mentioned and the number of panes ranged from six to twelve, sixteen or even twenty lights. The construction of the frames was quite similar in most cases. The frame was made of one inch boards with no parting strip. A parting strip is a narrow strip of wood which separates one sash from the other. It also forms a groove in which the two sash may slide past one another when opening either the top or the bottom sash. There is reasonable evidence that the top sash, at least in the earlier houses, was fixed. Both sash had "plain" meeting rails and a frame made from one inch boards. This frame was secured to the wall by four or eight "trunnels" which is a perversion of "tree nails". Tree nails were squared and driven into round holes drilled into the log ends in order to have a better grip.

Before the Revolution in America window muntins were flat and as much as one inch in width. After this they were gradually refined. By the beginning of the nineteenth century they were only one half the former thickness. We have in our collection a muntin bar exactly one-half inch wide, dated approximately 1845. The sash thickness varied from one and one-eighth inches to one and five-eighth inches. Some of the early settlers were quite familiar with casement windows and French doors, which are really just oversize windows. There is also enough evidence to the fact that the more educated settlers preferred this type. Since such windows and doors were used extensivly in a great many of the better class homes in England, especially in the older ones dating back to the late Gothic period, it is not surprising that the settlers

coming from such homes were at least familiar with them. Certainly the Langtons used French doors. Captain Steele used both French doors and casement windows at least in his living room, and evidence points to the use of them in the log house at Shanty Bay. The owners of these three houses were very well-educated people. Where such windows and doors were made is difficult to say, except that there are numerous examples of this type in Prince Edward County. It is true that most of the houses in this county are of frame construction, but that would not preclude their influence on settlers farther west.

The officers' mess in Penetanguishene has casement windows of two sash of twelve lights each with no mullion. A mullion is the vertical dividing bar between two casement sash and it is customary to have a mullion with every two casements. The other interesting fact is that these particular windows open inward. This type of window was also used in the old Fairvalley church, established by Captain Steele, as well as in his own log house nearby. All three were built within a period of thirteen years and within reasonable proximity. The officers' mess was built in 1830, the log house in 1833, and the church in 1843. However, this could be just another Ontario regional characteristic which can be readily observed within a radius of from ten to fifteen miles, and it expresses itself in window treatment, types of doors or structural peculiarities. The most outstanding regional characteristic can be found in the design of fretwork of the so-called "gingerbread" type. This latter is probably the most original feature of Ontario houses; it is decidedly regional in character and deserves a separate detailed study as part of our Canadian heritage.

The chimneys were generally built of stone or of brick made locally. The fireplaces were from four to six feet wide with a hearth of stone or brick. Chimneys were entirely inside the walls, but in order to gain depth for the fireplace, the back of it was frequently even with the outside face of the end wall. This necessitated leaving an opening in the end wall and this feature may still be found in a considerable number of existing log houses. As a matter of fact, this proved so successful that it was frequently retained even in frame construction as shown in a house near Brougham or a house on Highway No. 8, Grimsby West. Log houses generally had one chimney and one fireplace since two would have placed them in the taxable class. Some researchers claim that the reason for the opening in the end wall was that there had been originally a chimney entirely outside the wall. This may have been so. However, we have not come across any evidence in support of this theory except in and around London, as mentioned by Patrick Shirriff in 1835 in his *Tour Through North America.*[9] He noted that some runaway negro slaves had settled near the Huron Tract boundary, close to the London

9. Patrick Shirriff, *Tour through North America*, (Edinburgh, 1835), 178.

District. The feature about their log houses which impressed him most was the fact that these houses had the chimneys entirely on the outside of the wall. This was, of course, a common practice in the southern states from which most of the slaves came. In Ontario, however, this was most uncommon and probably not found anywhere else. According to him, the houses of the coloured people appeared to be of peculiar construction, "having the chimney-stack on the outside of the log house, and which stack is composed of thin sawn timber, placed horizontally, and mixed with clay."

Almost the same type of chimney construction is mentioned by John McGregor in his *British America.*[10] According to him, "a wooden framework placed on a stone foundation is raised a few feet from the ground, and, leading through the roof with its sides closed up with clay and straw kneaded together, forms a chimney." The fact that the chimney led "through" the roof indicates that it was an inside one.

The life span of a log house varied a great deal. Some are still in use after one hundred and forty years. Others had a very brief existence. The degree of care expended on them determined very largely the duration of their existence. However, a great many had their life cut short by physical rather than natural forces. Fire was the most common enemy. Anne Langton makes some comment about John's log cabin being in great need of repairs after eight years. On November 22, 1793, Governor Simcoe wrote the Duke of Richmond: "I take this opportunity of observing to Your Grace that the season having been so favourable, the Troops are hutting themselves at the Post with great expedition: from the selection of material, I have reason to believe that they will build comfortable Barracks of logwork, which will last, it is presumed, for 7 years. . . . "[11]

This meant barracks constructed of logs as distinct from blockhouses. In several of his letters, Governor Simcoe mentions blockhouses as houses used possibly as barracks but with the idea of defence predominating. Blockhouses were of very tight squared log construction to make them bullet proof. On several occasions he also speaks of "bomb-proof" blockhouses. From the history of Fort York we know that there were at least half a dozen log houses for the soldiers, and undoubtedly it is to these barracks that he is referring. What he meant by expecting them to last only seven years is conjecture; either they were considered to be of no further use as far as military requirements were concerned, or that he expected them to be structurally unsound after that time. If this is so, then he was greatly mistaken, because some of these log barracks were in existence as late as 1860.

An interesting difference between the earlier log houses and the later ones is the absence of fireplaces in the latter, a central window in the

10. McGregor, *op. cit.*, 557 ff.
11. *Correspondence of Lieut. Governor John Graves Simcoe,* II, 108.

end wall on the ground floor instead of the fireplace, and a somewhat larger door than the usual one of three feet, or three feet six inches, by six feet. A house in Lafontaine, built in 1870, follows the classical plan of a three-room layout, the stair in the rear left corner and one or two chimneys beginning at the first floor ceiling. The ceiling joists are the typical English method of construction, having the beams fairly closely spaced with a thick plank floor above, in contrast to the continental method of spacing the beams widely apart, with secondary joists of lesser diameter framing at right angles into the primary ones. This primary beam was the "summer" of the New Englanders. The ceiling beams are round, about 8 inches in diameter and spaced about five feet apart. The ceiling height is seven feet. The windows are of the double-hung type with the customary proportions of three lights wide by five lights high. The muntin bars are rather heavier than the usual ones, and in this particular house the sash are also fixed permanently in the frame without any parting strip. The absence of a fireplace is quite logical because a fireplace is the most inefficient form of heating, consuming an unduly great quantity of fuel. Anne Langton, in one of her letters, expressed amazement at the unusually great quantity of wood consumed by one fireplace. By 1855 stoves were in common use; therefore, the most economical form of heating was achieved by installing stoves at the very beginning. This also resulted in cheaper construction since it omitted the expense of at least one fireplace.

Log houses are fast disappearing. If not from natural decay and neglect, it is the bulldozer which moves them out of the way to make room for the five-room bungalow of the speculative builder. It is a pity that more records of these fast disappearing Cinderellas are not made. It is true that they are not Architecture in the Grand Manner of the text book, that they have never felt the influence of a Wren, Jones or Adam; they very humbly performed the task expected of them without the sophistication of the "Georgian" house or the air of the "Classical Revivals". They are the forgotten beginning of Ontario's architectural history.

An interesting example is Col. Elliott's house near Windsor. This is not a true log house but it may be regarded as an excellent example of an expression of the owner's background. Colonel Elliott was of American birth, and settled near Detroit after the American Revolution, became Superintendent of Indian Affairs in that district, and also served in the Canadian Militia. This varied background may explain the mixed type of construction. Three walls are of frame construction in the typical manner of the day. The lower part of the south wall is of squared logs butting against the uprights of the opposite walls. The north chimney was entirely outside the wall in the manner of the log houses built by runaway slaves in Dresden near London. The south chimney is centred in the end wall, one half of it inside and the other half outside the wall.

This house was built in 1784 and is probably the oldest house in existence in Ontario. It is a pity that it is completely neglected, and it would be a service to the country if some person or organization would save it from utter ruin.

Among some of the better known log houses was John Galt's first house and office built about 1827. It has long since disappeared. Until a few years ago, only a few logs remained in the backyard of a farm near Guelph, but by now even they may have disappeared. Colonel Talbot's "Castle" is another log house worthy of note. This was built over a period of about ten years, from 1803-1812. For a long time it was also quite neglected until somebody from the United States bought it and renovated it for his own use. Such has been the fate of several houses in the Niagara peninsula and we feel very strongly about having somebody from another country preserve our history for us. At the point of writing, there was a rumour that this house had been purchased by a Canadian. We fervently hope that this is so.

The Waterloo Historical Society saved the only early log school house in Ontario. This school was built in 1820 and is an excellent example of the one-room school house described as "dark, rough, cold and dismal, with but two windows of six panes of six by nine each."

The Conservation Authorities of the Province of Ontario have bought an old log barn built in 1809, located at Edgeley. This is an excellent example of a "Dutch" barn and will be used eventually as a farm museum.

An attempt was made some years ago to preserve or restore the residence of Captain Steele. This would have cost in the neighbourhood of $30,000. However, the attempt to raise this considerable sum proved futile and the best that could be done was to build a monument to the memory of Captain Steele out of the stones and timbers salvaged from the ruins.

The town of York had its fair share of log houses, and we can only mention several of the better known ones. Probably the best known was Castle Frank, the summer home of Governor Simcoe. It was built in 1794 and stood on the brow of the west bank of the Don River near the present Bloor Street viaduct. Its construction was rather interesting in that the walls were built of horizontal logs, but instead of the usual cornering, the French method of having the ends of the logs in the shape of a tennon which fitted into a groove which ran the full length of a vertical corner post, was used. The overall measurements were about thirty feet wide by fifty feet long.

Old Fort York contained several log houses built by the Queen's Rangers around 1796. Some of the log houses were still standing in 1859 when they were clapboarded over to give them a "semi-respectable" appearance. These log houses were separate and distinct from the so-called blockhouses.

Lambeth Palace was the residence of Captain Shaw. It stood less than half a mile north of Queen Street and several hundred yards north-west of the old Trinity College. The "Tecumseh Wigwam" was a hotel on the north-west corner of Bloor Street and Avenue Road. It was built in about 1820 and demolished in 1874 and is simply designated as a "drinking place". Fortunately, the York Pioneer and Historical Society has used good judgment and foresight in preserving John Scadding's cabin which was built in 1794. This is built of squared logs and may be seen on the Exhibition Grounds in Toronto.

Probably the last record of a log house within the limits of the city of Toronto is that of old Captain James Spark's cottage which is mentioned in J. R. Robertson's *Landmarks of Toronto* in 1898. This cottage stood just north of Queen Street on Broadview. It was supposed to have been built about the same time as Castle Frank. It was a log house "standing in its own garden, and was designed more for use than ornament. The ceilings are barely seven feet from the floor and the walls, which are of squared timber, are about eighteen inches deep. It possesses no hall, the front door opens directly into the sitting room, which is an apartment about ten feet square upon which open two decidedly small bedrooms. There is a kitchen in the rear and some sleeping apartments in the half story."

The "Beehive" is another outstanding example of log construction. It was built by a person of means and excellent taste. The plan is that of a typical larger English house with the usual casement windows which one would naturally associate with this type of building. It is still in an excellent state of preservation.

The first jail was, of course, of log construction. It was built in 1798 on the south side of King Street opposite Toronto Street. The first execution was held in that same year. A certain John Sullivan was hanged for forging a note for about one dollar.

Probably the best preserved example of a log jail was the one which stood at Silver Islet about thirty miles east of Port Arthur. It has now been transformed into a summer cottage. Its outside dimensions were twenty-one feet wide by thirty feet long. The plan consisted of a narrow centre entrance at the east end with two offices, one at either side. Each office was approximately nine feet deep and seven feet wide and contained one window. Five cells were at the west end. Each one was three feet and nine inches wide by seven feet and four inches long with no outside windows. The doors were twenty-six inches wide and six feet and nine inches high. They were built of 2" solid oak planks with an opening sixteen inches wide and twenty-two inches high, barred with four iron bars, three-quarter inches in diameter.

Between the cells and the front offices was a common room ten feet wide extending the full width of the building and containing two windows, one at either end. Both windows were 35" wide and 4' 6" deep, barred

with nine ¾ inch iron bars. Both cells and common room were lined with 2" white oak planks, tongue and grooved, and nailed with square hand-made iron spikes. All hinges were iron strap hinges made from one-half inch stock. The door strap was twenty-four inches long while the wall straps were slightly curved, nineteen inches long and two per hinge. There were twelve bolts per hinge. There is supposed to be a log jail in Killarney, but apparently it has been altered so much as to be unrecognizable.

It is an interesting speculation as to why vertical timbering was not developed on this continent, especially since the origin of English timberwork is based on vertical structural members. Even in ordinary frame construction, it is the vertical members which, in the final analysis, carry the load. One of the oldest timber churches in England is a small church in Essex, referred to previously, dating back to 1015. Its walls are built of vertical oak timbers set into a horizontal oak sill. This church is called a "stockenchurch" from the Anglo-Saxon. In German, even today, "stock" means a stick or post. In early frame or half-timber construction the English used whole tree trunks for posts. They would use such trunks upside down, i.e., with the root end up, since the flare at the root end provided a larger bearing surface. This was especially true of corner posts. Certainly cornering would have been a great deal simpler had the settlers used this method of building. The one difficulty of spanning an opening could have been easily solved had the openings been raised directly up to the underside of the plate. In this one respect, the horizontal method presents an advantage since each log acts as its own lintel.

Reference to vertical log construction on this continent is very scarce. The earliest reference we have come across so far is in connection with the first settlement in the present state of Maine by the Plymouth Company in 1607. In August of that year a settlement was established at the mouth of the Kennebec River. Several houses were built including a church and a storehouse. Several of the houses were built of horizontal logs but with vertical slotted posts into which the log ends would fit. The log wall was divided into several bays which were marked by vertical posts. This settlement was abandoned the following year, and no settlers were brought out until about 1620, when the houses were built of the usual horizontal logs with corner notching.

The other reference to vertical timbering in the full sense of the word which we have found so far is in connection with the building of Fort Pontchartrain near Detroit. Here the walls were constructed by driving timbers vertically into the ground side by side, and both houses as well as the church were built in this manner resembling a stockade. However, one must keep in mind that this fort was not built by the English but by French soldiers from Montreal; therefore this manner of building was more closely related to French construction than English.

French influence on Ontario construction is very negligible. It is slightly more evident in Western Canada where the early traders were mostly French. The example given bears no relation to Ontario construction; it is only introduced to show what might have been. The only example of this type up to the present in Ontario is found in two houses at Fort Ste. Marie near Midland, but here again it was French construction rather than English.

Of all the literature available on the history of Ontario, none will present a more graphic picture of the trials and tribulations of building than the letters of John Langton and his sister Anne.[12] They both have left a most detailed account of the difficulties encountered by the early settlers in establishing a home in true pioneer fashion.

Of the two log houses which John Langton built, the first one is by far the more interesting. As a matter of fact, both houses are not typical of the period, neither in plan nor design. The first one was of proportions not generally found in early log houses, and the plan was quite different. The reason for this we shall see later. The second one which he built was less typical than the first one. It was also built of logs, to be sure, but that is where the similarity ends. The external design was far from that of a typical log house, the lines being more like those of an English cottage. Before commencing the construction of the second house, he wrote to his father stating that he did not think a two-storey log house feasible in Canada. He was wrong here, because there are log houses in existence which were built some twenty years earlier of two full stories in height and of very good Georgian proportions. But we must not hold this against him, because, after all, up to the time of building at least, he knew only the country around Peterborough, and the last house mentioned was built about twenty miles north-west of York.

One reason for following the construction of these two houses in so much detail is that the structural problems and procedure may be considered typical even though the end result was not. The second one is that, thanks to the vivid description of the erection and the subsequent difficulties encountered while living in them, we are able to reconstruct both houses in our mind's eye as clearly as if we were an actual spectator on the spot.

Early in August 1833 John wrote telling his father that he was scouting for land in what is now the Peterborough district. In connection with the Otonabee River, he says that at the two principal bends of the river there were two cities, Cambleton (now Campbellford) and Howard, the one consisting of a shanty, the other of a log house without windows. Walking from Peterborough to Mr. Stewart's place, who had settled a few miles up river in 1821, he notes that Mr. Stewart's log house was as comfortable as an "English cottage". This romantic notion of a cottage

12. W. A. Langton, ed., *Early Days in Upper Canada*, (Toronto, Macmillan, 1926); Anne Langton, *A Gentlewoman in Upper Canada*, (Toronto, Clarke, Irwin, 1950).

This is one of the rarest construction details. It shows the keying of an interior log partition with an exterior wall. In 1794 William Jarvis had to pay ten pounds extra to have them put in his log house "at or near the Town of York".

This is the most highly developed type of keying. It is often referred to as "dove-tail" or "self-draining" keying. Note the careful workmanship and the size of timbers. This is from a building on the former C. Stong farm at Steeles Avenue and Jane Street near Toronto.

This is probably the best preserved log-house of its type in Ontario. It is the original Samuel Frazer home built in 1855 near Midland. It is decidedly Georgian in proportion, well balanced and of first-class workmanship.

The Smith barn built in 1809. It represents a typical Pennsylvania-Dutch banked barn. The "bank" is on the opposite side. The barn consists of two log bays, one at each end with a threshing floor in between. All roofed over with a gable roof. Note the typical projecting forebay. The projecting logs supporting the forebay form an integral part of the structure. This barn has been restored since this photograph was taken.

always being "comfortable" persisted in his mind so much so that when he finally decided on a larger house four years later, he attempted to build precisely that. Architecturally speaking, this second house is of a very low order of imitation and, although it has the appearance of an "English cottage", it certainly lacked that solid comfort which, according to him, all English cottages are supposed to possess inherently.

He had some difficulty making up his mind as to the type of house to build, for on the 18th of the same month he wrote to his father,

> As to the house I cannot say what it will be as I hear so many opinions, and indeed have not yet finally settled its nature and dimensions. No two people give the same advice. Some say a shanty is good enough; others talk of log, frame, stone and brick houses. Franklins, cooking and common stoves and chimneys of different construction have each their own advocate. I incline myself to the regular routine; a wigwam the first week, a shanty till the log house is up, and a frame, brick or stone house half a dozen years hence, when I have a good clearing and can see which will be the best location.

Following this plan, he first built a shanty. As usual, this had no windows and only a canvas for a door and a hole in the roof for a chimney. No windows were required for the spaces between the logs were so great that when one was outside at night, with a fire inside, the shanty resembled a "tin lantern". A tin lantern consisted of a candle placed inside a metal cylinder into the walls of which were punched holes to emit some light and also protect the flame from the weather. Some time during the early part of October, he chose the site for his log cabin. By Saturday, October 19th, all logs had been cut. On this day the walls were raised, and John went down to "Purdy's mill", near Peterborough, to buy boards and potatoes. The total lumber bill for this cabin amounted to £5:2. By Tuesday the roof was on; on Wednesday, the walls were chinked, and on October 24th he slept under his own roof. He only hoped that the frost would hold off long enough to enable the mason to build the chimney. But in January 1834 he admits that the walls are still so full of holes as to admit daylight and wind enough to disturb the "equanimity of my candle". The house was certainly far from the hoped for comfort of an English cottage! Later on in the winter he says that one advantage of a cold room is that if one spills some ink, it freezes before it can spoil too much paper. Anne mentions a case of a baby frozen to death in its crib during a severe cold spell. The size of this house was about eighteen feet wide and forty feet long. By April of that year the roof was still only boards, not "Imbricated", but nailed on lengthwise, admitting considerable quantities of rain. The meaning of "Imbricated" is lapped as applied to the application of modern siding, or perhaps "tongue and groove". Since the boards were not "imbricated", we must assume that the joints were of the butt type, which would explain the great quantities of rain which came through. Having the boards nailed on lengthwise must not be construed as taking the place of clapboards. Clapboards are

used as a final covering, whereas in this case they were the underlay for some eventual roofing material.

He also built a barn and an ice house after completing the cabin. As for the house itself, he intended to put only a new coat of mud in the interstices and a new roof whenever required, since the cabin was only a temporary shelter. Judging from Anne's sketches, it must have been eleven logs high.

The ice house was of rather interesting construction. It was half below and half above the surface. The walls were of double log construction with a foot of earth between. The roof was of cedar slabs thatched with hemlock boughs and covered with earth from one to three feet thick.

There is an interesting point here, which, although of no particular significance in itself, will explain the odd proportion of his first house. Thomas Langton, John's father, was apprenticed to a merchant in Riga, Russia. Here he became well acquainted with the Russian type of log house, its construction and method of heating. He was very much impressed with the careful workmanship and also with the efficiency of their stoves. Prior to April 1834 he must have written to John making some remarks about the slovenly ways of building in Canada, of which the Rama house is an example. As an answer to this criticism, John explains in a letter dated April 19, 1834, that there is a difference between the old country and the new one, and great urgency of erecting even a temporary shelter for a settler. He goes on to say that labour is expensive, and since one has to be a jack-of-all-trades, one cannot be expected to be good at any particular one. "The cornering and hewing of a well built log house is not as nice a work as your Russian mode of fitting the logs, but the one your men have been accustomed to and the other they have never seen". In asking men to do something different from what they have been used to, one pays double and has to expect worse work. Besides, building a house in England or Russia, where one has all the experienced masons and carpenters to call on, with their horses and carts and materials ready at hand, is quite different from building the same in Canada. He proceeds to show why the Russian method is not applicable to Canada. "The ground has to be cleared, the logs have to be cut here and there to be carried on men's shoulders and raised to their places by mere human effort; trees have to be split and hollowed out into troughs to form the roof, boards have to be fetched from a saw mill sixteen miles off and then carried a quarter of a mile on your shoulders; the cellar has to be dug; the stones for the chimney have to be collected and carried by hand sometimes a considerable distance, and, if you are unfortunately late in the season, the clay which is to cement and plaster your walls must be mixed with boiling water and worked before a fire, and you must keep a fire in the chimney whilst building to keep your cement from freezing." He goes on to explain that while

in Russia the houses are chinked with pitch, such is not available in Canada and moss has to do. As for stoves, the Russian type is out of the question because it requires fire brick which is completely unheard of here.

In spite of all the arguments to the contrary, John must have been influenced to some extent by his father's description, because his cabin is more Russian than Canadian in plan and room arrangement. A typical Russian "izbah" had about the same proportions as to length and width and the room arrangement was basically the same. In plan, it was a succession of three rooms without any connecting passages. The first room was the kitchen and living room, the second the sleeping quarters, and the last one was a general store room. A brick stove was built, generally in one corner in the wall between the kitchen and the sleeping room so that it was possible to heat both rooms with one stove. The roof was thatch and the floor generally of hard-packed earth. The average life of a Russian log house was about seventy-five years. Some authorities claim that an izbah could be erected in five to six days by about four men. This claim is probably slightly optimistic. It is difficult to compare costs, but in about 1870, a Russian izbah would cost from 30 to 40 rubles. What the equivalent in dollars would be is impossible to say, since the purchasing power and the exchange value bear no relation to one another.

Four years later John finally decided on the type of house he intended to build. He again discussed the plan with his father. We need not go into details of the plan for the moment, but on February 11, 1837, he writes:

The question must first be decided between log, frame or stone; the latter is too expensive and the frame houses hardly more expensive than a good log house, are miserable shells which can never be kept warm. I therefore decided on a good log house, raised on a stone foundation to protect the lower logs, and the logs hewn square and bedded in mortar; it may afterwards be plastered or papered inside and roughcast outside. Something outside should be done to protect the timber, and the unsightlyness of the rough logs inside might hereafter be obviated the cheapest by paper—not on the logs, but on canvas—though a coat of plaster would be a more effectual safeguard against vermin.

"Bugs" certainly must have been a trial to all or most settlers, because we find very frequent references to this nuisance. In connection with Governor Maitland's visit to Peterborough, he says that the militiamen turned out and that guards were mounted before a log house dignified by the name of Government House, but, unfortunately, this house was so full of bugs that they had to erect a special tent outside for the governor to sleep in.

In 1833 John McGregor observed: "there can be little difference between European and American timber, as far as regards the one being

more congenial to the increase of bugs than the other; they are exceedingly rare in the wooden buildings in America, except in the oldest houses in the towns; and it is well known that there are few old houses in the towns in England that are not infested with those loathsome vermin." From other records it appears that bugs being "exceedingly" rare is a decided overstatement.

John goes on to say that the house will be one and a half stories high; nine feet from floor to floor, or eight and a half feet from floor to the underside of the beams. That the wall height of the second floor will be four feet straight, the remainder sloping, and the pitch of the roof was to be steep enough to permit an eight foot ceiling height.

This time his father, having apparently been convinced by John's arguments about a two-storey house, must have suggested a one-storey house with the corresponding increase in floor space. But now John argued that such a large floor area would be very impractical from the standpoint of framing. It would also be quite uneconomical because it would require more chimneys which would increase the fire hazard, and it would also require much greater roof areas subject to the attack of the weather. It would also be very uneconomical in space since too much of it would be lost in halls and passages. This almost anticipates modern residential planning principles. Structurally, a rambling one-storey house would also meet with difficulties since several logs would have to run the full length of the structure to serve as tie-logs. He was, of course, not aware that four years previously, Captain Steele had built his house which was eighty feet long.

He seriously contemplated building a Russian stove but the very bulk of it worried him. Besides, being a romantic, he did not like the idea of sitting in a room without a fireplace. He did, however, consider putting such a stove in the wall between the dining room and the hall. The size of the windows would be determined by the kind of glass available at the time of building.

He considered fourteen feet as the most practical width for a room, because that seems to be the length of logs most readily available. One glance at the dimensions of the rooms shows that he carried this out consistently in every room. As for foundation walls, he considered three feet in thickness sufficient, although he does not mention the depth at all. This is one instance where he miscalculated badly because he apparently did not consider the frost line as going down as deep as it actually does in that part of the province. And because of this the footings gave him constant trouble, especially that of the chimney, as we shall see later.

On May 7, 1837, the house had not yet been started due to lack of hands, so he did not expect the house to be ready by the end of August. Toward the end of May the Langton family had arrived and in due time moved into the new house. Toward the end of October Anne wondered

whether the house would be cold in the winter because of the lack of "double windows". The glass for the double windows had arrived but the putty was lost on the way so they were unable to complete the windows. In January she found out that the house could really get cold. Because of the shrinkage of the logs, the walls admitted so much fresh air that during a severe cold spell the water would actually freeze even a few inches away from the chimney. On January 23 the house really got a "chilling" when one morning the thermometer actually registered three degrees above zero while they were dressing. It is not known whether this was in degrees Fahrenheit or Centigrade, but even if the latter, it was too cold for comfort! All during that day they went about the house with a pot of paste and some brown paper to cover up the wind-holes. Apparently the gables gave them a great deal of trouble. The gable was boarded up with tongue-and-grooved boarding and it had shrunk so much as to admit an undue amount of cold air. The next day, after the wind had died down, the temperature inside the house had actually risen to twenty degrees above zero!

The stair bannisters were put up in the following April. Up to that time they had walked up and down the stairs without any guard rail. About the midddle of April the house was finally painted outside, and toward the end of the month the front steps were put up. Until then they had used sawed-off stumps as steps.

During January 1841 the house was finally plastered inside, and from now on the house was apparently very warm and comfortable. At this time Anne also mentions that John's house (the original log cabin in which he persisted to go on living by himself) was getting "crazy and cold". This was eight years after it was built. This coincides with Governor Simcoe's statement about expecting the log barracks at York to last about seven years. It is true that both were only temporary structures, consequently they would not be looked after as well as if they had been built for longer periods of occupation, but it is nevertheless an interesting coincidence.

In February of the same year Anne notes that they have not been able to get into their larder due to "variations in the atmosphere acting upon imperfectly seasoned wood, now shrinking it, now swelling it and destroying the perpendicularity of the doorposts, so that doors, not infrequently, will not open or shut." Later it was explained to her that this may be due to the frost heaving the foundations, which, as we mentioned earlier, were not deep enough to prevent this action. In the following year, 1842, they found that the chimney had settled so much that it had to be taken down and rebuilt. By September this operation had not even been started, but by November at least one chimney had been completed, and instead of fireplaces they now installed regular stoves. She mentions earlier that when the parsonage in connection with the old St. John's Church in Fenelon Falls was built, stoves were installed

at the very beginning and that they gave off so much more heat than a fireplace that the water had frozen "only once" in the house up to the time of writing, which was in February!

At the present time, the house is still standing, although very neglected and structurally quite unsound in parts. To restore it would require a considerable sum of money, but it is a pity that such a well-known house should be permitted to fall into complete ruin without any attempt at even partial restoration.

At first, the tumbled-down, neglected appearance of it is very depressing to the visitor. The altered plan does not help this mood in any way. The west kitchen wing, the original one, was torn down some years ago, when the chimney which must have had an inadequate foundation even after being re-built, finally collapsed and took part of the wing with it. The living room is a garage. The opening in the north wall where the chimney stood now serves as the garage entrance. The staircase is boarded up, and this is a very necessary precaution because it leads into nothing. The ceiling in the living room has partly collapsed. If a visitor, unaware of this, should proceed to climb the stair and not watch his step too carefully, he would land quite unceremoniously through this opening in the ceiling onto the floor in the living room below. The chimney between the hall and the dining room has been removed entirely and a new kitchen wing added back of the dining room. Some of the original window sash have been removed and replaced by the usual run-of-the-mill sash of a later date, thus adding another slight disappointment.

Architecturally, this house rates very low. The mouldings are very fine and delicate and one mantel, which we discovered leaning rather forlornly against the four foot "straight wall" in an upper bedroom is of very fine proportion and design although quite simple, but that is about all the good one can say about it. However, these mouldings have a fine "Georgian" character, and since the rest of the house is in a semi-Gothic revival, the mouldings are quite out of keeping with the style of the remainder of the house. The original sash has the standard Georgian proportion with seven by nine inch glass panes, while the heads of the windows are in semi-Gothic. The walls are rough cast and marked off in imitation stone joints. To make matters worse, wooden "stone" quoins have been nailed to the corners. All exterior trim, including the wooden quoins, is finished in "sand" to give them a resemblance of stone. To obtain this sanded finish the trim was painted with a varnish which was saturated with resin in order to make it quite "tacky" during the drying process and very hard upon drying completely. Next, a very fine sand was loaded into an ordinary leather fireplace bellows, and when the varnish had reached the proper tackiness, this sand was blown against it. On drying, it would give a reasonably good imitation of the real stone. Now such dishonest use of a material, or the pretence of a

material to be which it is not, is one of the cardinal sins in architecture, but John, being of a romantic nature, was not the least perturbed by this sham.

As far as the drawings of the house are concerned, we must, of necessity, assume certain facts which it is impossible to determine at the present time. For example, there are two types of window sash in the present building, one set with a Gothic type head, the other the typical Georgian double-hung window sash of three lights wide by five deep. The plan, the proportions of the elevation and the roof pitch lean strongly toward Gothic.

Another conjecture is the number of chimneys. In the original plan three chimneys and fireplaces are shown, one between the dining room and the hall, the second one in the centre of the west wall of the living room, and the third in the north kitchen wall. This is not in keeping with his arguments against too many chimneys. However, from the existing building, we know that there was a fireplace in the north wall of the living room, and unless the roof has been altered, which is not very likely, it would indicate the width of the kitchen wing as fourteen feet and flush with the west wall of the living room, allowing for two fireplaces back to back in order to save the construction of one extra chimney. Having two fireplaces back to back was a very common feature in a great many larger houses, especially so with inside fireplaces. The width of the kitchen wing would fit in with the argument that this width was the most practical one for a room.

In spite of all the architectural sins committed in this building, it would still be very unfortunate if it were allowed to deteriorate completely. It should very definitely be preserved, not for its architecture but for the history connected with it. In spite of its tumbled-down appearance, on visiting it a feeling of having been lived in permeates the building, and Anne's ghost still walks about it. We can see Anne going about the house with paste and brown paper attempting to cover all the blow-holes in the wall. A sense of reality pervades the building, something in the manner of the old historical buildings of the continent. We would advise every reader to peruse the Langton Papers before visiting the old house. At first one will experience a great disappointment at the utter neglect of it, but after the second or third visit, when the sense of disappointment has worn off, one begins to feel very much at home in it, and with a little imagination, we can again see an ordinary woman, called Anne Langton, going about the house doing her daily chores in the calm quiet way of the early settlers of Ontario.

APPENDIX I.

The following tenders, agreements, and bills of materials are direct extracts from the original Russell and Jarvis Papers in the Archives of the Toronto Central Public Library, and are published by permission of Mr. H. C. Campbell, Chief Librarian.

TENDER NO. 1

Proposal to Build two log Houses for His Honnour Peter Russell The Houses to be 16 by 20 foot Each and a Space betwixt of 16 ft more Which makes the Roof 48 foot long, The Roof to be Boarded and Shingled, The Gable Ends to be Studed and Wetherboarded With Rough Boards
To be 7 joists 5 by 9 Inches for the Grainery floor 20 foot long
To be 15 pair of Rafters 14 ft long 4 by 6 Inches and 15 Collarbeams 12 ft long 3 by 6
To be 4 plates 20 ft long 7 by 8 Inches 4 Dto 16 ft long 7 by 8 Dto for the Rafters to Stand on
To be 2 plates 18 ft long 8 Inches by 9 Dto for the Space betwixt the two houses
The Gable End Studs to be 3 Inches by 4 Dto

For the 2 houses I propose to Cut the logs and lay them up 12 feet high and put in the joists for the Grainery floor for 20.0.

I propose to Frame the plates Rafters & Gable End Studs for 16/pr 100 ft

The Scantling to be Sawn at the Mill

I propose to Board and Shingle the Roof for 18/pr Square and the Rough Wether Boarding at 10/pr Square and Barge Boards at 3 pr foot

---

the Bill of Scantling for the Above Work

7 joists 20 foot long 5 Inches by 9 Dto	140
4 plates 20 ft long 7 In by 8 Dto	80
4 Dto 16 ft long 7 In by Dto	64
2 Dto 18 ft long 8 In by 9 Dto	36
30 Rafters 14 ft long 4 In by 6 Dto	420
15 Collar Beams 12 ft long 3 In by 6 In	180
150 foot of Scantling for Gable End Studs	150
	1070

Value of the Work

	£	s	d
1000 foot of Scantling Framing at 16/pr 100 ft	8	0	0
13 Square and a half of Shingling at 18/pr Square Boarding included	12	3	0
4 Square of wether Boarding at 10/pr Square	2	0	0
56 Foot of Barge Boards for the Gable Ends at 3d pr foot Running	0	14	0
Cuting the logs for the two houses and laying them up	20	0	0
N.Y.C.	£ 42	17	0

Value of Lumber

1070 foot of Scantling at 16/pr 100 ft	8	11	6
1300 ft of Refuse Boards at 6/pr 100 ft	3	18	0
6000 Shingles at 40/pr 1000	12	0	0
N.Y.C. £	24	9	6
	42	17	0
Sum Total N.Y.C. £	67	6	6

TENDER NO. 2

Estimate to Build a log House 20 feet long 16 feet Wide and 11 feet High

Cuting hawling and puting up logs	6	8	0
Frameing 428 feet of Scantling at 14/pr 100 feet For Joists Rafters and Gable End Studs	1	19	6
To 5 Squares of flooring at 8/ laid Rough	2	0	0
450 Feet of Boarding and Shingling the Roof at 16/pr 100	3	12	0
150 Feet of Wether Boarding at 10/pr 100 ft	0	15	0
To cuting out logs for one Door and one Window at 4/	0	8	0
To making one Door frame and Two Window frames at 8/	1	4	0
To making Two twelve light Sashes at /9d pr light	0	18	0
To making one Ledge Door Grove and tongue 10/	0	10	0

Below is Expence of lumber for the above Work

550 Feet of one Inch and quarter floor Boards at 9/pr 100	2	9	6
500 Feet of Refuse Boards at 6/pr 100 feet for the Roof	1	10	0
200 Feet of Wether Boards at 6/pr 100 for gable Ends	0	12	0
100 Feet of 1¼ In Boards for Door frame Sash frame Step ladder Barge Boards and Ridge Board	0	9	0
3000 Shingles at 20/pr 1000 - 18 Inches long	3	0	0
428 Feet of Scantling Sawing and hawling at 14/pr 100	1	19	6
N.Y.C. £	27	14	0

Rafting and Halling Included

TENDER NO. 3

Proposal to Build a log House Twenty feet long and Sixteen* feet Wide from out to out the logs to be laid 10 foot high to be one Door and one Window below, and one Window in the Gable end above, The Window below to have 20 lights and the Window above to have 12, the Door to be made of Inch boards Groved and Tongued the lower Floor to be plained Groved and Tongued the upper floor to be laid Roughf To be Seven Sleepers in the lower floor and Seven joists in the upper floor to be 7 pair of Rofters in the Roof to be Covered With Refuse Boards the

Gable Ends to be Studed and Wetherboarded and the Roof to be Shingled and Barge Boards on the Gable Ends

I propose to Cut the logs and put them up for 20 Dollars	8	0	0
480 foot of Scantling at 20/pr 100 ft	4	12	0
500 foot of Refuse Boards at at 6/pr 100 ft	1	10	0
700 foot of 1¼ Inch Boards at 10/pr 100	3	10	0
460 ft of Scantling frameing at 16/pr 100 ft for Roof floor & Gable ends	3	13	6
5 Square of Shingling at 16 pr Square	4	0	0
5 Square of Rough Boarding the Roof at 4/pr Square	1	0	0
2 Square of Wetherboarding the Gable Ends at 10/pr Square	1	0	0
3 Square of Grove and Tongue flooring at 20/pr Square	3	0	0
3 Square of Rough flooring plain joint at 10/pr Square	1	10	0
Cuting out the logs for the Door making the Door and frame & fixing	1	16	0
To making and fixing the lower Window and frame and cuting out logs	1	18	0
To making and fixing the upper Sash and frame	1	4	0
N.Y.C. £	36	13	6

* There seems to be a correction made in this figure as the number 18 is written directly above the sixteen.

Newark 26th August 1794

An agreement between Wm Jarvis Esq on the one part and Abner Miles on the other part which is as follows—

The Said Abner Miles agrees to build a Log House of Square pine Timber at or near the Town of York on Lake Ontario agreeable to the plan herewith annexed and at the prices hereafter mentioned—

	£ s d
Shingles	28.0.0
Bricks for four chimneys	48.0.0
Timber	130.0.0
Underpining the House	8.0.0
Building four Chimneys	12.0.0
Persons to attend the Masons	12.0.0
	238.0.0
Log Partitions	8.0.0*
	246.0.0
Digging and Walling the Cellar	10.8.0
	256.8.0

*—later he seems to have increased this price to £10.00

The logs to be laid up the thickness of [illegible]. The said Miles is to find the bricks & fill in between the Logs & the said Jarvis is to find the Lime to make the Morter to lay said between the Logs, to build the Chimneys & point the underpining of the House.

The Logs to be seven [inches] thick and squared on all sides—to be built fourteen feet high sixty eight feet Long, built in three divisions viz. the two wings to be each thirty four feet by twenty four feet—the Center Division to be twenty feet square—The Roof to be shingled on Boards the said Jarvis to find said boards and Nails—the Shingles to be 18 Inch & of the best quality & to be laid in the best manner. The House to be raised three feet from the Ground—one foot to be stone the other two feet to be logs below the sills. To build four Chimneys, two at the end of each wing with two fireplaces in each Chimney, the said Jarvis finding Lime and Iron Bars for the Chimneys & the said Miles to find every other requisite. The lower story to be ten feet high and the upper story to be four feet high to the top of the Plate. The Roof to be hipped. The Partitions in the Lower Story to be Logs Six Inches thick and to be doughtaled at each end. The Cellar to be under the Center division twenty feet Square and seven feet deep to the sleepers and to be walled up with stone.

The said Jarvis and the said Miles farther agree that the said Jarvis shall be at liberty to add or diminish the said building as occasion may require, at the same time increasing or diminishing the expense of the building in a fair and equitable proportion.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

The second and concluding part of Mr. J. I. Rempel's article on Early Forms of Building Construction in Ontario is printed in this issue. We neglected to mention previously that Mr. Rempel is the first Vice President of the York Pioneer and Historical Society.

F. M. Quealey, C.S.B., is a Basilian scholastic in his third year of theological studies. His paper on the Fenian raid at Limeridge was prepared for a course assignment in the Department of History at the University of Toronto.

Dr. John Saywell is a professor in the Department of History, University of Toronto, author of a number of articles and books including his prize-winning volume on the office of the lieutenant-governor, editor of the *Canadian Historical Review* and of the recently revived *Canadian Annual Review.*

NEWS NOTES

The Society's Annual Meeting will be held at Jordan, June 15, 16, and 17. Details of the programme and further information will be sent to members shortly.

The Canadian Historical Association will hold its Annual Meeting at the University of Montreal on June 8, 9, and 10. The Archives Section and the Council will meet on June 7. Professor R. A. Preston, Royal Military College of Canada, Kingston, is Chairman of the Programme Committee. The Association will again sponsor a Summer Study Centre at Queen's University, Kingston, for eight weeks beginning July 6. The purpose is to enable a small group of historians to carry on individual reading and study, supplemented by discussion of common problems.

Members of the Ontario Historical Society will be pleased to learn that Mr. John M. Gray, a Past President of our Society, has been appointed to the Board of Governors of York University.

The Dictionary of Canadian Biography has issued a Preliminary List of Names for its Volume I, covering the period up to 1700. Anyone who may have biographical information for the Dictionary or anyone interested in the project generally, is invited to write to the Office of the General Editor, Dictionary of Canadian Biography, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 5.

Several members have been kind enough to write to the Editor pointing out the confusion of John Rolph with Thomas Rolph in connection with Professor Farrell's article in our last issue. The error in the text was an oversight in proof reading, but the same error which appears in "Our Contributors" is due entirely to haste and carelessness on the part of the Editor, who inserted the reference just as the issue was going to press without thought of anything except the news aspect. The Editor promises to be more careful in future!

PRESENTATION OF AWARD OF MERIT BY THE CANADIAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

As was announced at the Annual Meeting last June, the Ontario Historical Society received an Award of Merit from the Canadian Historical Association. The citation is for the Society's "outstanding contribution to local history in Canada". This was the first time that such awards had been made.

On the facing page is a photograph of officers of the Society receiving the Certificate. From left to right they are: Miss Adeline Hanna; Mr. Charles Humphries; Mr. A. D. McFall, President; Miss Kaye McFarland; Mr. Andrew Taylor; Mrs. Gordon Lapp; Professor J. M. S. Careless, Immediate Past President; Mr. John M. Gray; Miss Edna Ash, Secretary-Treasurer; and Miss Mary Farmer.

THE FENIAN INVASION OF CANADA WEST
JUNE 1st and 2nd, 1866

By F. M. Quealey, C.S.B.

In June, 1866, the province of Canada West was invaded by an armed force of American Fenians. This so-called invasion soon petered out to a mere raid whose military incidents now seem of little import. Yet, the personalities, the issues, and the events themselves still possess considerable fascination for the historian. And, the actual facts of the case gain further importance by their circumstances which elevate this border incident to major significance in reflecting and determining attitudes in both Canada and the United States in the tense atmosphere of this post-Civil War and pre-Confederation period.

To understand these facts and their significance it will be necessary to trace the background of the American Fenian movement as well as review Canada's military situation on the eve of the attack. The actual events of the raid will be treated at considerable length before we move on to a consideration of their consequences for all parties concerned.

THE FENIAN BROTHERHOOD

> The entire story of Fenianism is a record of ineptitudes; of costly and laborious organization, conceived in secrecy and shrouded in mystery, which was no sooner achieved than it vanished, with nothing to show as fruit of all its travail.[1]

The Fenian conspiracy traces its origins to the Phoenix clubs and Young Ireland agitation of 1848. James Stephens had been wounded in this unsuccessful rising. He had escaped to France and lived there until 1857 when he was approached by John O'Mahony and other fellow revolutionaries who had prospered in the United States. They wanted him to return to Ireland and organize another movement which they would finance from America. Stephens accepted and by 1858 was back in Ireland forming secret military societies ranging from fifty to a hundred and fifty members each. These groups were known as 'Fenian Circles' after the ancient militia of Ireland. The leader of each circle had complete power and was called its 'Centre'. Ordinary members took an oath of obedience and knew little of the plans of the 'centres'.[2] This system spread quickly throughout the Empire and was to prove especially popular in the United States. Large sums were collected but of the over one million dollars donated within a seven year period only about $150,000 ever reached Stephens, while the rest went to local organizers who ex-

1. F. H. Severance, "The Fenian Raid of '66," *Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society*, XXV (1921), 226.
2. John O'Leary, *Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism*, (London, Downey & Co. Ltd., 1896), I, 125.

ploited popular feeling for their own ends.[3] Meanwhile, Irish immigrants had been encouraged to join the Union armies to gain valuable military knowledge. Consequently, by the end of the Civil War Fenianism had proved very popular in the many areas of conflict in which Irish units had participated. In Ireland itself Stephens had used the 'Trent Affair' and the funeral of McManus, another Irish revolutionary hero, in 1862 to spread the movement which now claimed fifty thousand enrolled members.

A newspaper called *The Irish People* was established along with a provisional government in Union Square, New York. It was proclaimed that: "The day for peaceful agitation, for petitioning and parliamentary humbug is past forever in Ireland. The sword alone can win the liberty of that green isle."[4] In the winter of 1863-4, at a general congress held in Chicago, Colonel John O'Mahony was elected President of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Then an 'Irish Fair', also held in Chicago, welcomed Stephens as the 'Chief Organizer of the Irish Republic'. It was reported here that there were then 613 Fenian circles in America including 80 in the British provinces.[5] O'Mahony visited Montreal soon afterwards and traded harsh words with D'Arcy McGee who responded to the charge of 'traitor' by calling O'Mahony a 'crack-brained enthusiast'. Of Fenians in general McGee said: "The civil war, as was natural, bred a class of men averse to returning to the paths of peace. They borrowed the Irish cry, caricatured the Irish cause, and selected Canada as their field of plunder".[6]

In January of 1865 a second Fenian Congress was held at Cincinnati with a reported 1700 delegates. A constitution for an Irish Republic was formally adopted. O'Mahony was re-elected as President, a Senate and Secretaries of State, War, and Finance were elected, an issue of government bonds was authorized, and a military council was appointed under Brigadier General McGroarty. The end of the Civil War in April freed thousands of trained soldiers and efforts were spurred for an insurrection in Ireland. However, faulty security measures led to a series of British raids in September and in November resulted in the capture of Stephens. Despite the latter's escape to France all this meant that the Fenian movement in Ireland had received a set-back from which it would not recover.

Now, apparently for the first time, serious consideration was given to the possibility of invading Canada. Some action was imperative to satisfy American followers. Canada was close, apparently defenceless, with supposedly discontented inhabitants and an incompetent government. This prospect proved very appealing to many Fenians and when

3. E. R. Cameron, *Memoirs of Ralph Vansittart*, (Toronto, Musson Book Co. 1924), 166.

4. *Ibid.*, 165.

5. E. A. Cruikshank, "The Fenian Raid of 1866," *Publications of the Welland County Historical Society*, II (1926), 11.

6. Cameron, *loc. cit.*, 192.

O'Mahony refused to give it his consent he was deposed by the Fenian Senate on the pretence of his putting the bonds of the Irish Republic on the market. Colonel William R. Roberts was elected in his place and henceforth the Fenians were split into two groups over the issue of invading Canada.

Roberts was assisted by Colonel Sweeney as his Secretary of War and their open advocacy of the invasion of Canada was balanced only by their lack of reality. Wolseley may have been very close to the truth when he said of the subsequent raid and its planning:

> So idiotic was it as a military enterprise that I have always thought that it must have been undertaken in order to fill the pockets of the patriotic leaders.[7]

The Roberts wing of the movement received a setback at the general convention in January, 1866, when O'Mahony was triumphantly re-elected. Roberts and Sweeney refused to accept this verdict and went on extensive speaking tours which gained them considerable support and financial aid. Their adoption of a militant policy had greatly accelerated the growth of the 'circles'. Companies and regiments were organized throughout the country and many veterans, discouraged with their post-war adjustment, joined the movement even though they cared nothing for Ireland. Arms were also readily available as the government was now offering rifles at low prices and these were bought by the Fenians and converted into breech-loaders.

While on these speaking tours Roberts and Sweeney outlined their grandiose plan of conquest whose main purpose was:

> To conquer a certain territory upon which the Irish flag shall be planted, and which shall be made a base of operations against England for the liberation of Ireland.[8]

Elsewhere Sweeney openly proclaimed detailed plans for the complete conquest of Canada which would then be renamed 'New Ireland'. Even should these plans meet with obstacles the Fenians still hoped to achieve their ends by provoking actual conflict between the governments of Canada and the United States. At the very least they were confident that any American government, conscious of the Irish vote, would hesitate to interfere and might even be induced to assist Fenian activities along the border. Actually, the extent to which the American government was willing to tolerate this movement may never be fully ascertained. In any case, some serious qualifications would have to be made before the following Fenian claim can be accepted:

> But for the interference of the United States Government the victory won by General John O'Neill would have been followed up by the

7. G. J. Wolseley, *The Story of a Soldier's Life*, (Westminster, Constable & Co., 1903), II, 158.

8. C. P. Stacey, "Fenianism and the Rise of National Feeling in Canada at the Time of Confederation," *CHR*, XII (1931), 241.

> veterans of the Union armies until the green flag waved over every city in the Dominion.[9]

Meanwhile, in April, 1866, O'Mahony was finally prevailed upon to allow his assistant, B. Doran Killian, to launch a Fenian expedition to seize Campobello Island in Passamaquoddy Bay. The subsequent fiasco not only gave the people of New Brunswick more cause to consider Confederation favourably but also did much to destroy the Fenian reputation for prowess.

On May 10th James Stephens arrived in New York from Paris and was greeted at a rally in Jones' Wood where over sixty Fenian circles paraded their bands and colours. Actually, Stephens himself would desert the movement before the year was out leaving others to bear the brunt of the unequal contest to which his powers of persuasion and exaggeration had committed them.

Meanwhile, both the British and Canadian governments were being kept informed of Fenian activities by various spies.[10] British officials in the United States were another valuable source of information.[11] Yet, considering this and the additional help given by American newspaper correspondents in Nashville, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Buffalo and their persistent reports of Fenian movements it is difficult to understand why better preparations were not made on the Canadian side of the frontier.

What inroads had Fenianism made among the people of Canada West? This movement found many sympathizers in the province but their size and strength has been largely over-estimated.

> Any conspiracy in Canada was carried on in the paralyzing fear not only of government but of the Orange Association and of mob loyalism generally, and there were few to take the risks.[12]

A certain Michael Murphy was the 'Head Centre' in Canada and President of the Hibernian Benevolent Society of Toronto. Toronto seems to have had the strongest 'circle' of such disaffected Irishmen and a notable demonstration had been staged there on November 5th, 1864. It was also from Toronto that Mederic Lanctot, through his paper *The Irish Canadian*, was doing all in his power to make Canadians believe that the Irish Catholics of Canada were "prepared to receive the Fenians with open arms".[13] Yet, when the possibility of the invasion of Canada itself became a factor most Canadian Fenians desisted from the movement or confined their support to O'Mahony's ventures in Ireland. Some, like Murphy, would become more violent, and several of them were captured

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9. F. L. Crilly, *The Fenian Movement: the Story of the Manchester Martyrs*, Vol. II of *The Irish Library Series*, (London, John Ouseley Ltd., 1909), 64.
10. Henri Le Caron, *Twenty-Five Years in the Secret Service: the Recollections of a Spy*, (London, William Heinemann, 1892), 28.
11. H. G. Macdonald, *Canadian Public Opinion on the American Civil War*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1926), 201-3.
12. Stacey, "Fenianism and the Rise of National Feeling", 240.
13. L. B. Shippee, *Canadian-American Relations 1849-1874*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1939), 221.

along with incriminating evidence at Cornwall in 1866 while attempting to join Fenian invasion forces across the border.

CANADA'S MILITARY SITUATION

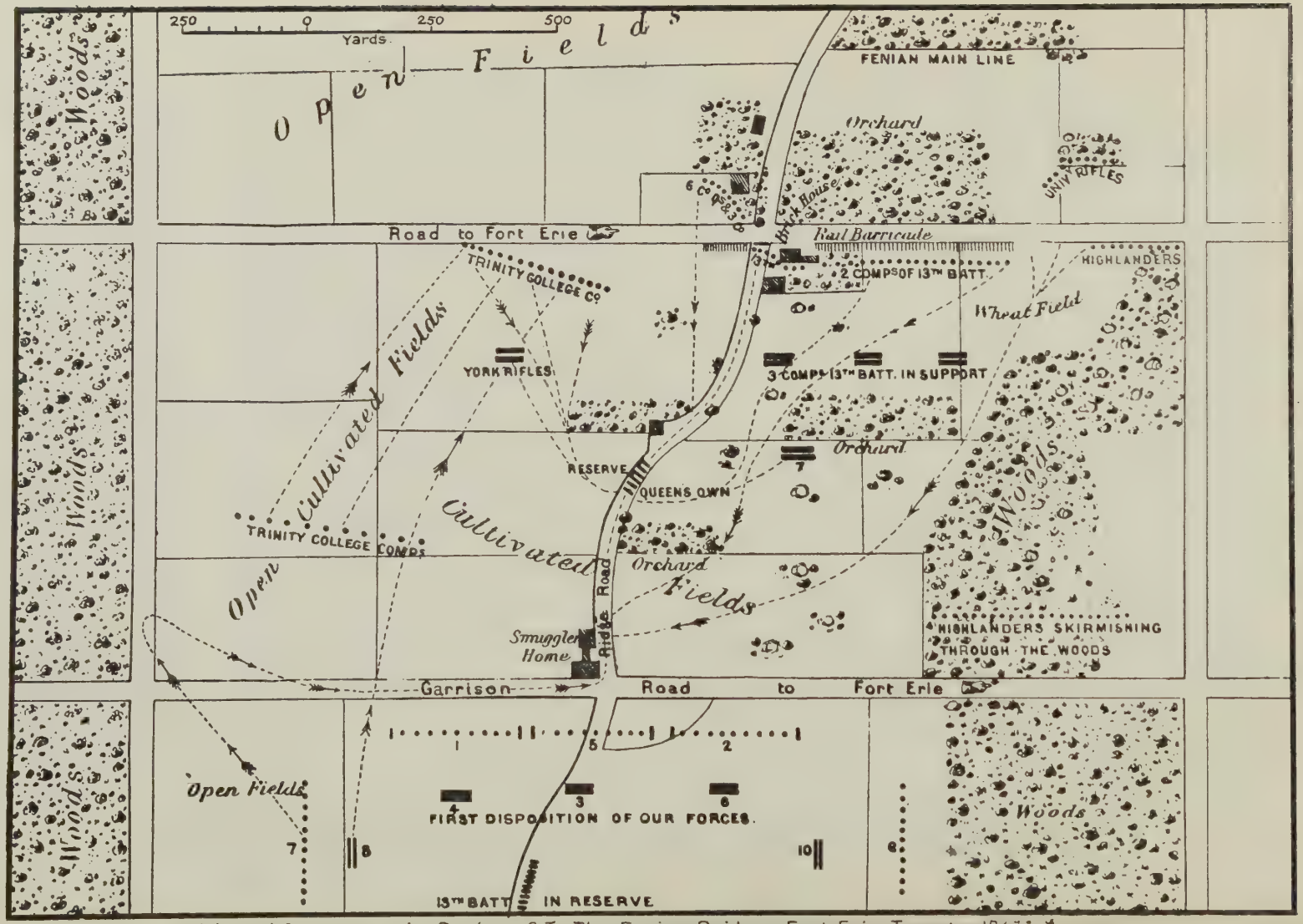
Earlier in the decade of the 1860's Canada had found it necessary to safeguard her frontiers but, strangely enough, not so much from invasion as from infractions of neutrality on the part of her own people. After the St. Albans Raid the regular troops guarding the frontier were supplemented by three provincial battalions of volunteers involving about 2,000 men who saw service from December 1864 until the end of April 1865. The reply to the original call was prompt but in November, 1865, when the first Fenian alarms made themselves felt another call for 700 men was slower to be answered.[14]

This may serve to spotlight the fact that the Fenians were to gain notoriety largely because they became a personal threat to many Canadians who had previously considered their southern neighbours as a dangerous but distant foe. It is interesting to note that even the 'Trent Affair' and the 'St. Alban's Raid' had not really aroused the Canadian people.

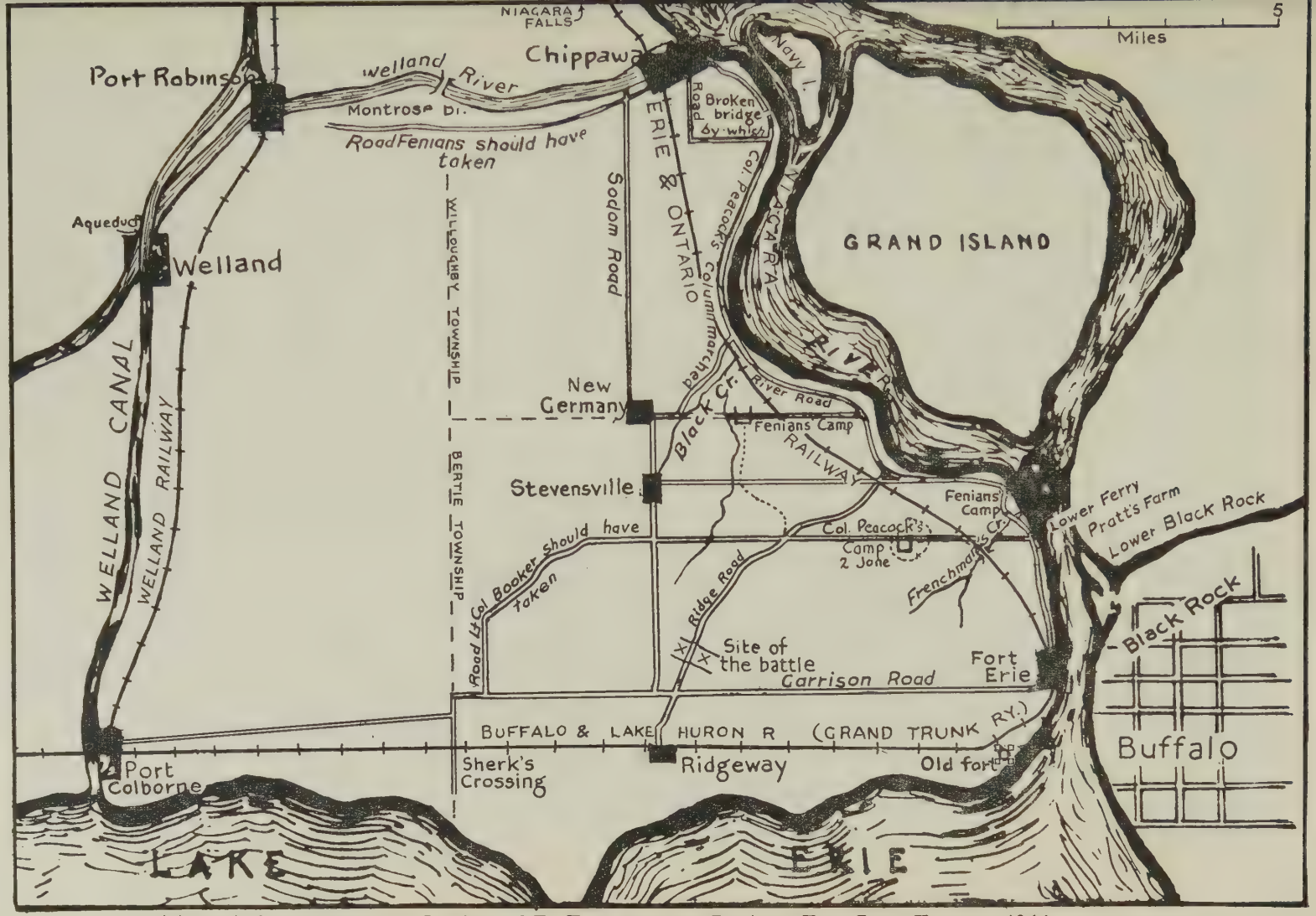
Up until the beginning of 1866 the people of Canada had proved fairly indifferent to Fenian threats but from January of that year onwards the formidable character of Fenianism gradually caused genuine concern. In late February when news of the suspension of Habeas Corpus and wholesale arrests in Ireland reached America the Fenians were stirred to new heights of frenzy. John A. Macdonald was now Attorney-General and had also assumed the portfolio of the Minister for Militia—an office only created in 1863 and indicative of the temper of the time. Rumour spread that serious demonstrations were scheduled for March 17th. On March 7th, 1866, the Executive Council of Canada, on the advice of Macdonald and of Sir John Michel, the commander-in-chief, called into active service a force of ten thousand volunteers to supplement the three provisional battalions of volunteer infantry scattered in small detachments along the Detroit, Niagara, and St. Lawrence frontiers.[15] The response was encouraging, and indicated the seriousness with which the people of the provinces were viewing this menace. Col. Patrick MacDougall, the Adjutant-General, reported that 14,000 men had been mustered within 24 hours. One author attributes this to the fact that: "The volunteer force seemed to be made at once the occasion and the symbol of a new national pride".[16]

By the end of March the sense of danger had passed and most of the men were released from duty. During April and May the volunteers

14. C. F. Hamilton, "The Canadian Militia: from 1861 to Confederation", *Canadian Defence Quarterly* (Ottawa: Modern Press, 1929), VI (April, 1929), 204.
15. C. F. Hamilton, "The Canadian Militia: the Fenian Raids," *Canadian Defence Quarterly* (Ottawa: Modern Press, 1929), VI (April, 1929), 345.
16. Stacey, "Fenianism and the Rise of National Feeling," 242.



Adapted from a map in Denison, G.T., The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie, Toronto 1866, c.C. J. BOND



Adapted from a map in Denison, G.T., The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie, Toronto 1866, C.C.J. BOND

did gain considerable drill but little experience in tactics. By now these volunteers could be numbered at 25,000, with two special corps made up of the Civil Service Rifles and a unit of 2,000 Grand Trunk employees organized to safeguard rail communication. When we consider their apparent eagerness it becomes still more difficult to explain the slow workings of the government.

> During all this time no preparation of any kind for campaigning was made, no organizing done, no staff officers appointed, no stores or equipment prepared, and practically everything neglected. The rifle companies all over the country were scattered and had no connection with each other. They were not told off into battalions; and during all March, April, and May, in the face of constant and alarming indications of danger, nothing was done.[17]

That sufficient measures were not taken, especially towards the end of May, to repel any invading force may have been due to the suspicion of public officials that this was just another alarm. On the other hand, it seems that motives of false economy motivated at least some of the officials concerned. Still others shared with American officials a very low estimate of the actual Fenian threat and this position seemed to be confirmed in April with the faulty execution by the Fenians of their invasion of New Brunswick. At any rate, the government was satisfied with issuing, towards the end of May, a general warning to the commanding officers of the volunteer militia units to be in readiness for active service. Even when these forces had been activated it was clear that:

> The preliminary distribution was made with bad judgment and shows great lack of forethought; had some competent officer like Colonel Wolseley been directed to prepare a plan of defence in advance, the story would have been different.[18]

Despite repeated intelligence from many sources of the imminence of a Fenian raid and especially of a concentration at Buffalo it was not until May 31st that the Adjutant-General was ordered to call out 14,000 volunteers. Again a wave of patriotic fervour swept over the people and groups of former residents from places like Chicago organized themselves and returned to fight for Canada.[19] By June 3rd over 20,000 men were under arms. This meant that on the Niagara front there were 975 regulars, 1800 militia, and 6 guns. By that date, however, the Fenians had come and gone.

THE FENIAN INVASION

During the month of May, Roberts, Sweeney, and other "assiduous but inept practitioners of the art of revolution"[20] had taken some con-

17. G. T. Denison, *Soldiering in Canada*, (Toronto, George N. Morang & Co., 1901), 85.

18. Hamilton, "The Canadian Militia: the Fenian Raids," 348.

19. J. A. Macdonald, *Troublous Times in Canada: a History of the Fenian Raids of 1866 and 1870*, (Toronto, W. S. Johnston & Co., 1910), 94-9.

20. Stacey, "Fenianism and the Rise of National Feeling," 261.

crete steps to implement one of their invasion plans. In Buffalo, on the last two days of May, the inhabitants noticed considerable numbers of strangers wandering the streets in groups and who were presumed to be Fenians. Upon questioning, these men said they were going to Canada to work on the railways or that they were ex-soldiers heading for the California gold fields. This last explanation was especially incredible since it was known that many of them had come from western points like Cleveland, Cincinnati, or Chicago.

The British Consul in Buffalo, H. W. Hemans, telegraphed his findings on the afternoon of May 31st to Major-General Napier who was in command of the First Military District of Canada, with his headquarters at Toronto. Napier's indecision at this point may well confirm Wolseley's opinion that this officer was, "useless for any military purpose".[21] Meanwhile, back in Buffalo, the Collector of Customs had forbidden the clearance of any ship or boat between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. without a special inspection and absolutely forbade all departures between 4 p.m. and 9 a.m. until he received further word from the Treasury Department. The steam revenue cutter U.S.S. *Michigan* was on hand to enforce these regulations.[22]

Buffalo itself was a fertile ground for Fenian sentiment and at least one unit, the Buffalo 7th Regiment, Irish Army of Liberation, had been organized from the area and had formally received its battle flag in early May. Sympathizers with 'the cause', many of them quite influential, seem to have warmly welcomed the influx of Fenians at the end of May and these forces were quickly quartered in the Dudley and Townsend Halls close to the harbour. The enthusiasm of the local circles was at its zenith and at a rally in St. James' Hall on the night of May 30th advance claims were taken for the various farms to be conquered in Canada.[23] Large quantities of arms and equipment had already been shipped to Buffalo and were now distributed by men like Patrick O'Day, a leading auctioneer.

On the evening of May 31st, about 1500 men gathered at the Fenian drill halls and other meeting places near the docks. They soon dispersed in groups of about fifty in various directions. As we have already seen, the customs collector had prevented their embarkation from the harbour and the car-ferry of the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway had been moored on the Canadian side of the river on this particular night.[24] Not to be put off so easily, the various Fenian groups marched by various converging routes to the suburb of Lower Black Rock, five miles distant. Here they found nine wagons loaded with arms and equipment along

21. Wolseley, *loc. cit.*, 146.
22. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 18.
23. Severance, *loc. cit.*, 266.
24. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 19.

with a canal-barge, two steam tugs, and four canal boats waiting at Pratt's Landing to carry them to the other side.[25]

The command of this expedition fell to Colonel John O'Neill since he was the senior officer present and the intended commander, Brigadier-General Lynch, failed to appear. These and other Fenian officers were addressed at this time by the ranks with which they had been commissioned by the Fenian Congress rather than by the ranks most of them had possessed while in the Union armies. O'Neill had gained considerable experience in the federal army. He had been instrumental in the destruction of Morgan's guerillas in southern Ohio in July 1863 and had served well in Georgia, under Kilpatrick in Sherman's 'March to the Sea' in November, 1864. He seems to have been a sincere and unselfish enthusiast for the Fenian cause and as a soldier he was brave, quick in coming to a decision, and resourceful.

The brigade which O'Neill commanded consisted of the following units: his own 13th Tennessee Regiment from Nashville, the 17th Kentucky Regiment from Louisville under Colonel Owen Starr, the 18th Ohio Regiment from Cleveland under Colonel John Grace, the 7th New York Regiment from Buffalo under Colonel John Hoey, and an independent company from Terre Haute, Indiana, under Captain Hugh Haggerty.[26] Most of the officers and men were veterans accustomed to the hardships and fatigue of campaigning. Although O'Neill claims his total strength was only about 800 the best estimates place his force at somewhere between 1000 and 1500.[27] Many of the officers wore the blue uniform of the Federal army but most of the men were in civilian dress except for an indeterminate number who wore green shirts and black belts. Each unit carried its own large green silk battle flag with a gold harp or sunburst embroidered or painted on it.

About midnight the advance guard under Colonel Starr crossed in a canal-boat towed by one of the tugs and landed at Freebury's Wharf less than two miles below the village of Fort Erie. At 3.15 a.m. most of the remaining troops crossed in the four canal-boats towed by both of the tugs. Apparently, during the morning and afternoon of June 1st, this force was further augmented by small groups who crossed the river in rowboats.

Soon after landing Colonel Starr's regiment was detailed to occupy Fort Erie village and gain control of the railway yards. The village had a population of about 600 in those days but the Fenian landing had already been spotted and just as the farmers of the area quickly drove their livestock inland, so too the railway officials quickly put all their rolling-stock into one train which was towed by four locomotives and

25. G. T. Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie with an Account of the Battle of Ridgeway, June, 1866*, (3rd edition; Toronto, Rollo and Adam, 1866), 19.
26. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 20.
27. G. F. G. Stanley, *Canada's Soldiers 1604-1954*, (Toronto, Macmillan & Co., 1954), 224.

departed from the village just as the invaders were coming in sight of it.[28] Starr had to content himself with the requisition of horses and other provisions which was soon agreed to by the Reeve, Dr. Kempson, and his councilmen.[29] Five or six men of the Royal Canadian Rifles, acting as a look-out party for deserters, were captured and paroled. After collecting provisions, cutting the telegraph wires, and burning Sauerwine's Bridge Starr returned to the main camp which had been set up at Hewbigging's Farm on the right bank of Frenchman's Creek close to the River Road. From here a grandiose proclamation was issued announcing that the Fenians had, "taken up the sword to strike down the oppressor's rod, to deliver Ireland from the tyrant, the despoiler, and the robber". It went on to an appeal to Canadian Irishmen, "in the name of seven centuries of British iniquity and Irish misery", to, "stretch forth the hand of brotherhood in the cause of Fatherland".[30]

Foraging and scouting parties were sent out from the camp. Captain Donohue led a large detachment down the River Road to burn the bridge at Miller's Creek. Meanwhile, the United States revenue cutter U.S.S. *Michigan* had steamed down from Buffalo harbour and anchored near the wharf at the foot of Ferry Street in Black Rock. The ferry-boat was thus restricted in its operations but small groups of reinforcements, reporters, and sightseers still managed to slip across. Then at 11 a.m. a tug towing two canal-boats loaded with arms and supplies slipped across to Freebury's Wharf before the *Michigan* could intervene. The *Michigan* then moored at Pratt's Wharf to prevent any further reinforcements.[31]

During the first day of the raid, Major-General George G. Meade, the Commander of the U.S. Military Division of the Atlantic, arrived in Buffalo and appointed Major-General W. F. Barry to command the District of Ontario extending from Erie, Pa. to Oswego, N.Y. His orders, while somewhat belated, were quite precise:

> I direct you to use the force at your command to preserve the neutrality by preventing the crossing of armed bodies; by cutting off reinforcements and supplies; by seizing all arms, ammunition, etc., which you have reason to believe are destined to be used unlawfully, and in fine, take all measures precautionary or otherwise to prevent violations of the law. For this purpose you will move the forces at your command to such points as are threatened, and you shall employ such tugs or vessels as can be procured for watching the river and lake shores, and taking all such measures as in your judgment the emergency requires.[32]

In compliance with this two river tugs were quickly hired and armed so as effectively to prevent further reinforcements.

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28. G. Wells, "The Fenian Raid in Willoughby," *Publications of the Welland County Historical Society*, II (1926), 57.
29. Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*, 19.
30. Stanley, *loc. cit.*, 224.
31. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 26.
32. Severance, *loc. cit.*, 276-7.

We come now to one of the great dilemmas of the raid. Why did not O'Neill procede to inflict the damage that was now possible to him because of the bungling of his opponents during this crucial first day of the raid? Port Colborne could have been occupied and the aqueduct at Welland destroyed by a strong party of mounted men. Perhaps his intelligence system was faulty although he now had Major John C. Canty as his chief-of-staff and Canty had resided in Fort Erie village for the previous six months.[33] Probably he had never expected to be so unopposed in his landings. Then too, it is quite likely that his instructions had not been too explicit since the Fenian leaders both before and after this raid never seemed to be very certain just what purpose it had been intended to achieve aside from the general aims of the movement. At any rate, the golden opportunity for O'Neill to capitalize on his own strength and the mistakes of his opponents was on this first day of the raid. Instead, precious hours were spun away in an apparently normal camp routine.

At about five in the afternoon Colonel Hoey with two hundred men advanced down the River Road about five or six miles before halting when a mounted party thought to be British civilian scouts was sighted. O'Neill had also heard that there was a body of British regulars and volunteers at the Falls and he resolved to make his stand at Black Creek if pressed by this force. Between nine and ten that evening O'Neill marched to support Hoey and after crossing Miller's Creek turned westward on the town-line between the townships of Bertie and Willoughby. Reaching the Erie and Niagara railway the column was halted while outposts were sent out to hold the railway and road bridges over Black Creek.

> Their position here was admirable. How they happened to discover it so soon is extraordinary and tends to show that they must have had the ground reconnoitred, and the position of their camp chosen before they came over.[34]

Meanwhile, drinking, brawling, and desertion, together with lack of transport and the cutting off of his reinforcements from across the river had reduced O'Neill's effective force and compelled his destruction of over a thousand spare muskets as well as some reserve ammunition.

Around midnight O'Neill received correct intelligence concerning the composition of the two forces converging on his position. He quickly resolved to intercept the volunteer force coming from Port Colborne before it could unite with the stronger force of veterans at Chippewa. "My object was to get between the two columns, and, if possible, defeat one of them before the other could come to its assistance."[35] Accordingly,

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33. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 27.
34. Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*, 65.
35. John O'Neill, *Official Report of General John O'Neill on the Attempt to Invade Canada May 25th, 1870: also a Report on the Battle of Ridgeway, Canada West, June 2nd, 1866*, (New York, John J. Foster, 1870), 39.

the men were roused at 3 a.m. and after a hurried breakfast marched south through the fields until they reached the Ridge Road. "This march at early day break was so skillfully and secretly effected that for many days after they left their movements were a perfect mystery."[36] The point at which O'Neill was seeking to intercept the weaker enemy force was at a place where its progress would be checked by a break in the railway systems which necessitated an overland march for the force from Port Colborne. With this in mind O'Neill continued his march along the Ridge Road heading for the Ridgeway Station on the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway which was now less than three miles distant.

CANADA'S EFFORTS TO CHECK THE INVASION

The regular troops stationed in the western parts of Canada West were comprised of a battery of Royal Artillery and the 16th and 47th Regiments of Foot, quartered in roughly equal proportions at Toronto, Hamilton, and London. This force was supplemented by about four thousand volunteer militia, mostly infantry, who had received at least some rudimentary training in the cities and towns. As we have already seen, despite increased tension and threatened invasion none of these militia had been properly organized and equipped for field service. One squad of volunteer cavalry, the Governor-General's Body Guard of Toronto, were of a superior quality. Generally, however, the lack of an engineers or service corps, signalling or telegraph units, the absence of an effective commissariat, and a weak intelligence system would all prove dangerous handicaps for any effective campaigning.[37]

At 6 a.m. on the morning of June 1st General Napier received a telegram from the British consul in Buffalo informing him of the invasion. Napier ordered all available units to the frontier and mobilized the volunteer units that had already been alerted for such an eventuality. At this late stage, however, eagerness could not surmount the previous lack of organization and provides at least some foundation for the judgement of Napier that: "In private life a charming man, he was quite useless at all times as a commander."[38]

At least some of the delay was deliberate. There was definitely a danger in committing all the forces in the area to repelling this one attack since there was still the possibility that it was only a feint to cover a main attack to be launched elsewhere. However, it was soon decided to concentrate on repelling the invaders at Fort Erie and, by noon, Colonel George Peacocke of the 16th Regiment arrived at Niagara Falls by a special train with a battery of the Royal Artillery having six guns and wagons fully horsed. He also had three companies of his own regiment and three of the 47th. Informed of the enemy's advance down the River Road Peacocke proceded with his infantry by rail to secure

36. Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*, 67.
37. J. A. Macdonald, *Troublous Times in Canada*, 138.
38. Wolseley, *loc. cit.*, II, 160.

the bridges at Chippawa.[39] By nine o'clock on the night of June 1st Peacocke had occupied Chippawa but inexperienced civilian scouting left him vague as to the precise whereabouts of the invaders.[40]

Learning around midnight that a force of about nine hundred Canadian volunteers had occupied Port Colborne Peacocke ordered Captain Akers of the Royal Engineers, who was acting as his intelligence officer, to ride across the country and, "order the commanding officer to move his whole force by rail not later than 5.30 a.m. and march to join him at Stevensville at 10 a.m. next day".[41] Peacocke's force now numbered 400 regular infantry, 200 regular artillery with six guns. He also had 150 regulars and 765 volunteers in support at St. Catherines. The Port Colborne force consisted of 480 men from the Queen's Own Rifles, 265 men from the 13th Regiment, 95 from the York and Caledonia Rifle Companies, and 60 from the Welland Canal Field Battery. However, the route selected for the juncture of these two forces was unfortunate. Peacocke was limited in his topographical knowledge to a post-office map indicating the mail routes.[42] Hence the volunteer force was expected to detrain, not at Sherk's Crossing, but at Ridgeway which was a mile further east than Stevensville meaning that the subsequent march would be open to a flanking attack.

Meanwhile, in Port Colborne, the railway line had been cleared of some cars derailed in their hurried flight from Fort Erie, Sauerwine's Bridge had been repaired, and Robert Larmour, the railway superintendent, had even reached Fort Erie on a hand-car and returned with Richard Graham, the collector of customs, reporting the town deserted of Fenians and inhabitants alike.[43]

At about 11 o'clock on the night of June 1st, Lieut. Colonel A. Booker arrived at Port Colborne by rail from Hamilton with the 13th Battalion. He automatically outranked and superceded Lieut. Colonel J. S. Dennis as commander of the Port Colborne force. Upon hearing the reports of Graham and Larmour the colonels proposed to cut off the retreat of the invaders and so aid in the destruction of the entire Fenian force. Graham's reports of dissipation at the Fenian camp seemed to promise an easy victory and made this volunteer force doubly anxious to get into action.[44] Booker and Dennis proposed to embark eighty men of the Welland Canal Battery and the Dunnville Naval Brigade on board the steamer tug *W. T. Robb* which would then patrol the river off Fort Erie. The rest of the force would proceed by rail to Fort Erie and then attack the Fenian camp which was presumed to be at Frenchman's Creek. Cap-

39. George Peacocke, *Official Report* (appendix of Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*), 77.
40. Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*, 26.
41. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 31.
42. Denison, *Soldiering in Canada*, 99.
43. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 31.
44. C. S. Akers, *Official Report* (appendix of Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*), 84.

tain Akers had arrived during these discussions and despite the contrary orders which he himself was bearing from their commanding officer Akers was persuaded to approve the former improvisations and probably had a hand in working out its details.[45] At 3 a.m. a telegram was sent to Peacocke informing him of these changes. Without waiting for confirmation the embarkation was completed and Dennis, desiring an independent command, went along as commander thus leaving the remaining forces amazingly destitute of experienced officers. For, strangely enough, Akers, also eager for action, went with Dennis and thus deprived Booker of the former's topographical knowledge.[46]

Booker, having entrained the rest of his force, was about to depart for Fort Erie when at 3.45 a.m. he received Peacocke's command to stick to the original plan. The confusion now involved in detraining highlighted the poor equipage of this particular expeditionary force. Having been sustained in a state of excitement for their first twenty-four hours under arms the troops were now found to lack blankets, knapsacks, messtins, water-bottles, proper clothing, and even sufficient food. Finally, after an impatient and unprofitable delay the train finally departed at 5 a.m. and even then was at least half an hour ahead of schedule since in his report to Booker, Akers had adjusted the times to allow for delays which did not in fact materialize.[47]

THE BATTLE OF RIDGEWAY

The stage has now been set for the skirmish at Limestone Ridge which has been traditionally known as the Battle of Ridgeway. The accompanying maps will clarify the dispositions under consideration and it is to be noted that our account follows the general lines of C. A. Cruikshank's treatment which is the best co-ordinated account that has yet been written.

Booker's Canadian force numbered approximately 840 effective combatants. Yet, military experts would shudder at the fact that Booker's horse was the only one in the entire expedition, that facilities for the transportation and distribution of ammunition after leaving the train were non-existent, and that although three surgeons were present there was no ambulance or hospital staff.[48]

Shortly after six o'clock the train arrived at Ridgeway and the men detrained and formed up on the station platform. The village of Ridgeway was situated on the Limestone Ridge and was the site of the first station and siding for the Buffalo, Brantford, and Lake Huron Railway. The village itself consisted of a flour-mill, a couple of stores, fifteen or twenty houses and shops, besides two or three taverns. Most of this was deserted now and reliable information was unavailable. Some time was

45. J. A. MacDonald, *Troublous Times in Canada*, 140.
46. Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*, 34-5.
47. *Ibid.*, 36.
48. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 33.

now consumed in inspecting arms and distributing ammunition. Then, instead of making an effort to requisition wagons to carry the reserve ammunition it was sent back to Port Colborne by train.[49] While they were preparing to march, local farmers rode in to tell Booker of the approach of the Fenians. But, such information seems to have been discarded as unreasonable since the Fenians had been over on Frenchman's Creek only the previous afternoon.[50] Now Booker, plagued by the same lack of proper maps that had affected Peacocke's decisions, set off for Stevensville along the Ridge Road on what was supposed to be a routine march to join forces with his commanding officer. As the troops swung into a marching column a beautiful June morning gave signs of becoming a very hot day.

O'Neill's force had in fact been sighted by the local horsemen who had tried to convey the news to Booker. Train whistles and bugle calls informed O'Neill that he was approaching his desired foe. He continued to advance until positive contact was made with the Canadian soldiers marching towards him on the same road. Quickly he established a battle-line along the Bertie Road which intersected the Ridge Road almost at right angles. A shallow ditch and rail fence were hastily improved with additional rails and boulders and A-shaped rifle pits soon projected from the defensive position.[51] O'Neill's right was anchored at John Anger's brick house, barn, and outbuildings and his line extended eastward five or six hundred yards with the left curving forward into a strip of maple woods on the crest of the ridge which here broadened to about three hundred yards before dipping steeply into the valley. A small reserve was stationed in an orchard about three hundred yards in rear of his centre and Colonel Starr was in command of the line of skirmishers who had pushed forward nearly half a mile to the Garrison Road. By this time O'Neill's entire force did not number more than 800 men but they were well-trained, alert, and ready for action.[52]

Booker's force advanced in a column of fours with the Queen's Own under Major Charles T. Gillmore in the vanguard. In advance marched the number five company supplied with Spencer Rifles and under the command of Captain Edwards. Following the Queen's Own were the York Rifle Company under Captain R. H. Davis, and the 13th Battalion under Major Skinner, with the Caledonia Rifle Company under Captain Jackson forming the rearguard.[53] On approaching the Garrison Road, the Canadian vanguard spotted armed men lounging in front of the 'Smugglers' Home', a tavern owned by Michael Hoffman and situated on

49. A. Booker, *Official Report* (appendix of Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*), 80.
50. L. B. Duff, "Sam Johnston, Smuggler, Soldier and Bearer of News," *Publications of the Welland County Historical Society*, II (1926), 84.
51. Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*, 42.
52. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 34.
53. Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*, 40.

the north west corner of the intersection. The Trinity College Company of the Queen's Own, armed with Spencer repeating rifles, were extended as a firing line. A few shots were exchanged and two more companies were deployed to extend the firing line on both flanks. Within ten minutes the fire was rapid and continuous and from the amount of ammunition apparently expended it is truly remarkable that so few casualties resulted from this action.[54]

At this moment Booker received Peacocke's message ordering him to put off his departure from Port Colborne for an hour because of Peacocke's own delay in moving from Chippawa. This message had missed Booker at Port Colborne and had been brought on by a Mr. Stovin, a railway employee, who recognized its importance.[55] It seems that Booker could still have broken off the action but since his men were apparently driving in the enemy's forward positions he sent Detective Armstrong to Peacocke to inform his commander that action had been joined and to ask Peacocke's assistance as soon as it was possible.[56]

The Fenian skirmishers fell back steadily in an attempt to draw their foes into a prepared ambush. Unfortunately, premature shooting from the maple woods on Booker's right disclosed the Fenian position too soon.[57] The University and Highland companies of the Queen's Own were extended to clear this area. Meanwhile, the Trinity College company had worked its way into the low ground west of the road in an attempt to turn the enemy's right. But, their over-eagerness had prompted the first three companies engaged on the firing line to use up almost all their ammunition in the first fifteen or twenty minutes and while advancing about half a mile had enveloped themselves in a dense cloud of their own smoke and had almost reached O'Neill's main position in a state of exhausted fire-power.[58] At this point they were relieved by three companies of the 13th in scarlet coats while the York Rifle company took over the low ground on the left.

Two companies of the Queen's Own were still clearing the woods on the right and formed a separated firing-line off at an angle and divided from the main force by two or three hundred yards. The remaining companies of the 13th and the Caledonia Rifles formed a reserve just off the Ridge Road to the right and three hundred yards behind the firing-line. Still farther back were the six companies of the Queen's Own including those who had just come out of action and these were drawn up in quarter column.[59]

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54. W. C. Chewett (ed.), *The Fenian Raid at Fort Erie June the First and Second, 1866*, (Toronto, W. C. Chewett & Co., 1866), 61.
55. E. C. Guillet, *Early Life in Upper Canada*, (Toronto, Ontario Publishing Co. Ltd., 1933), 707.
56. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 35.
57. J. F. Dunn, "Recollections of the Battle of Ridgeway," *Publications of the Welland County Historical Society*, II (1926), 53.
58. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 35.
59. Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*, 43-4.

Word was passed to bring up the reserve ammunition so carelessly left on the train and Booker himself took up a position in reserve where, unfortunately, he was out of sight of the developing action and his lack of aides hindered him in relaying his orders and in following the progress of the battle.[60] Even so, the new firing line had advanced so steadily that the Fenians mistook them for regulars. The York Rifles and the 13th succeeded in turning the Fenian right so that the whole Fenian line deserted its barricades on the Bertie Road and retired upon their reserve position under pressure of a continued pursuit. It is to be noted that subsequent Fenian accounts differ on this claiming that the Fenians merely dropped back to a new line of defence in order to draw on the center of Booker's line and so enfilade it from the flanks.[61]

It was at this point that a crucial mistake was made which determined the outcome of the battle. A group of mounted Fenians came charging around a bend in the Ridge Road. These may well have been Fenian officers attempting to rally their men. Another group of horsemen, who later turned out to be curious farmers, was sighted in the valley on the left in a turn of the road leading straight to Stevensville.[62]

The great dread of any infantry body of those days swept through the ranks as the cry of 'cavalry' was passed along. The bugler was ordered, apparently by Major Gillmore, to sound "prepare for cavalry". The firing line attempted to form squares in the fields and their example was followed by the supports and the reserves.[63] The Fenians were quick to capitalize on this error and, rallying, swept forward with wild yells firing into the packed ranks. O'Neill was subsequently to state:

> I have nothing but praise for the conduct of the enemy at this battle. Up to the time when they made the fatal mistake of forming the square they had driven in all my skirmishers and were advancing on my main position which was well fortified. While I had a number of veterans many of my men had never been in battle and gave us a good deal of trouble. We were, to tell the truth, just on the point of retiring to the woods nearby, when the enemy, seeing a few of my men who had horses they had picked up, formed a square to prepare for cavalry. Seeing their mistake the officers evidently gave orders to reform. It was my opportunity and just at the psychological moment I gave the order to charge.[64]

Booker sensed almost at once how close his force was to disaster and after an unsuccessful attempt to extend his firing lines again he had his bugler sound "retire". Perhaps having realized the initial mistake the order to advance should have been given instead in order to restore confidence but Booker had by now lost touch with the battle and the men were becoming increasingly confused by the repeated bugle calls.[65]

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60. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 36.
61. Richard Pigott, *Personal Recollections of an Irish National Journalist*, (London, Simkin, Marshall & Co., 1882), 211-12.
62. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 36.
63. J. A. Macdonald, *Troublous Times in Canada*, 141.
64. Dunn, *loc. cit.*, cited on p. 52.
65. F. H. McCallum, "Experiences of a Queen's Own Rifleman at Ridgeway," *Annual Report of the Waterloo Historical Society*, III (1915), 28.

The result was confusion, disorder, and panic and the retreat amounted to a stampede for many units. An eyewitness compared it to the confusion of the retreat from Bull Run.[66] The two companies of the Queen's Own who had been engaged on the right flank were almost isolated but succeeded in breaking through. The Fenians themselves were disorganized by this stage of the battle and only really pressed the pursuit as far as the Garrison Road, although Starr advanced with his regiment as far as the village of Ridgeway.

Booker considered any counter-attack impossible and did not attempt to stem the retreat which now poured along the railway tracks to Port Colborne. About half way back this badly dispirited and humiliated force was met by a locomotive and two flat cars which had been returning to Ridgeway station with the reserve ammunition.[67]

Booker had lost one officer, one non-commissioned officer, and seven privates killed, five officers and twenty-six other ranks were wounded, many of whom fell into Fenian hands along with seven unwounded prisoners. O'Neill claimed his own losses at eight killed and fifteen wounded but they were probably somewhat higher.

It would be well to interject here that subsequent criticism by the press led Colonel Booker to demand a Court of Inquiry to investigate his role in the Battle of Ridgeway. The request was granted and its presiding officers, Lieut. Colonels Denison, Chisholm, and Shanly, handed down the following statement:

> There is not the slightest foundation for the unfavourable imputations cast upon him [Lieut. Colonel Booker] in the public prints . . . having fallen into error, he promptly exerted himself in person to repair the effects of his error in a manner which could leave no stain upon his personal courage or conduct . . . from the formation of the expedition to the time it came out of action, it was under disadvantages with which Her Majesty's forces seldom have to contend . . . more than half of the two battalions were youths under twenty years of age, very few accustomed to drill and many had never shot anything but a blank cartridge.[68]

THE FENIAN RETREAT

O'Neill was more than satisfied with his skirmish at Limestone Ridge and conscious of the larger force advancing on his rear from Chippawa he now began his own retreat to Fort Erie village by the Garrison Road while Starr's regiment followed the railway tracks in the same direction.

Let us leave O'Neill's force for a moment and shift our focus to the *W. T. Robb* and its experiences under Lieut.-Colonel J. S. Dennis.

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66. N. Brewster, "Recollections of the Fenian Raid." *Publications of the Welland County Historical Society*, II (1926), 76; J. A. Macdonald, *Troublous Times in Canada*, 50.

67. A. W. Reavley, "Personal Experiences in the Fenian Raid," *Publications of the Welland County Historical Society*, II (1926), 69.

68. *Proceedings and Report of the Court of Inquiry on the Late Engagement at Lime Ridge* (appendix to J. A. Macdonald, *Troublous Times in Canada*, 241-2.

This force, comprising eighty-seven men of all ranks with Captain Richard S. King commanding the Welland Canal Field Battery and Captain Lachlan McCallum commanding the Dunnville Naval Brigade, left Port Colborne at about 3.30 a.m. and arrived at the ferry landing in Fort Erie village shortly after daybreak. Unidentified persons in the area were taken into custody and having re-embarked two hours later the tug dropped downstream to Freebury's Wharf. Here more stragglers were rounded up and strong reconnaisance along the Bowen and River Roads failed to reveal any signs of the Fenian force except for their deserted encampment.[69] On their trip downstream they had already been told by an armed tug from the *Michigan* which had hailed the *W. T. Robb* in mid-stream, that the Fenians had left their camp, and now, they finally learned from civilians of the enemy's advance towards Ridgeway. They re-embarked at the mouth of Black Creek for the return trip to Fort Erie village.[70]

Arriving at Fort Erie in mid-afternoon most of the men had landed when they were warned by a retired soldier, Captain Lewis Palmer, of the Fenian approach along the Garrison Road.[71] All prisoners were put on board and Dennis, instead of retiring with his tiny force, formed his firing-line on the River Road near the ferry-dock.[72] We must remember that Dennis may well have reasoned that Booker had already met and routed the enemy, thus accounting for his failure to arrive at Fort Erie according to their original plan which unknown to Dennis had been cancelled by Peacocke. If his supposition was true then surely he could conclude that his small body of organized men would prove sufficient to round up any dispirited stragglers seeking to recross the river. Unfortunately for him his reasoning was based on a false premiss and as a result the short skirmish at Fort Erie village was to be the second biggest incident of the invasion.

The first group of Fenians appeared on the high ground north of the Bertie Road but were quickly driven back by Dennis' firing line. However, when a much larger force advanced down the street from the south the tug cast off and drifted with the current while the officers on shore ordered the men to fend for themselves.[73] By running down the River Road, Captain McCallum and about fifteen others were able to board the *W. T. Robb* again. Dennis himself, by hiding, adopting a disguise, and shaving off his moustaches, was finally able to slip through the Fenian lines and join Peacocke's column. On board the tug it was decided that, "on account of being encumbered with so many prisoners on board

69. J. S. Dennis, *Official Report* (appendix of Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*), 89.

70. C. S. Akers, *Official Reoprt* (*ibid.*), 85; J. H. Thompson, *Jubilee History of Thorold, Ontario* (*The Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society*) (Thorold: Thorold Post Printing & Publishing Co., 1897-1898), 92-3.

71. Reavley, *loc. cit.*, 70.

72. W. H. Ellis, "The Adventures of a Prisoner of War in the Fenian Raid Campaign of 1866," *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, III (1926), 215.

73. Chewett, *loc. cit.*, 56.

(fifty-seven in number) and so very few men left to guard them, to run to Port Colborne and send the prisoners to a place of safety".[74]

In the village of Fort Erie itself the Canadian forces were rapidly overcome. Captain King and a few men made a short but stubborn resistance from behind piles of cordwood on the wharf.[75] Another small group took refuge with several civilians in the large wooden post office building. From here the Fenians were effectively repulsed for a quarter of an hour until lack of ammunition and danger to the civilians led to surrender.[76] From this brief engagement four officers and thirty other ranks, including five wounded, were taken prisoner while the Fenians counted their losses as seven killed and over twice that number wounded.

A couple of hours later O'Neill, having learned from his scouts the general location of Peacocke's force, shifted his men to the car-ferry dock near the ruins of the old fort. Waiting here for re-inforcements and well situated for an effective escape he sent a message to Buffalo asking for instructions. Word had already been brought over of a large and successful Fenian rally held in Buffalo the previous night.[77] Over two thousand reinforcements were apparently ready to cross and Buffalo as a whole now seemed to be supporting the invasion. Even a conservative newspaper like *The Commercial Advertizer* was making the following editorial comments on June 2nd:

> With the memory of the recent past action and sympathy of the Canadian people in behalf of the rebels still fresh in our minds, it is but natural that we should contemplate the present demonstration, and in fact, any demonstration which may be made, as a retributive visitation over which we have no tears to shed.[78]

By nightfall O'Neill had moved his entire force within the ruins of old Fort Erie where a defensive position with strong outposts was established. He realized his tenuous position but even so was rather flamboyant in his retrospective report:

> About six o'clock p.m., June 2nd, I sent word to Captain Hynes and our friends in Buffalo, that the enemy could surround us before morning with 5,000 men fully provided with artillery, and that my little command, which had by this time considerably decreased, could not hold out long; but that if a movement was going on elsewhere, I was perfectly willing to make the old fort a slaughter-pen which I knew it would be the next day if I remained. For I would never have surrendered.[79]

We must turn now to follow the activities of Peacocke's force on this fateful June 2nd. At 4.15 that morning he had been reinforced by 150 of the 47th Regiment from London, 415 of the 10th Battalion from Toronto, and 350 of the 19th Battalion from St. Catherines which in-

74. L. McCallum, *Official Report* (appendix of Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*), 92.
75. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 40.
76. Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*, 61.
77. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 41.
78. Severance, *loc. cit.*, 275.
79. O'Neill, *loc. cit.*, 40.

creased his strength to approximately 1,400 men of all ranks and arms. He also had six field guns. Peacocke has been criticized for his cautious and slow movements during these crucial hours but as Denison points out:

> At that time he expected that a heavy battle would take place, before the Fenians would be driven out, and that instead of the object being to prevent them getting out of the country, the opinion of everyone was that the great difficulty would be to drive them out, and that he was right in proceeding cautiously with that object in view.[80]

Peacocke's departure from Chippawa was delayed because of poor commissariat arrangements. Even when the men were finally fed his planning was handicapped by his faulty mail-route map which indicated a circuitous march of eleven miles to Stevensville as opposed to the eight mile direct route by the Sodom Road.[81] Peacocke was hindered by a lack of efficient mounted scouts. Progress was hampered still further since the Fenians had destroyed the bridge at Black Creek and the weight of Peacocke's own guns had broken the bridge at Usher's Creek. Distant musketry was heard and it was finally learned that the Fenians had marched in the direction of Ridgeway. At 10.30 a.m. Detective Armstrong arrived with Booker's message but Peacocke was still four miles from the scene of action.

The oppressive heat, heavy equipage, and more broken bridges prevented any effective speeding up of the march. By 11.30 a.m. Peacocke was forced to halt at New Germany to allow for consolidation, rest, and food.[82] The entire afternoon was spent in camp at this spot as scouts gradually informed Peacocke of Booker's retirement and the Fenians' retreat to Fort Erie. By five-thirty the march was resumed southward through Stevensville to the Bowen Road where it turned eastward. The Governor-General's Body Guard, a squadron of volunteer cavalry from Toronto under Major G. T. Denison, had joined Peacocke's force around four that afternoon and was now acting as the vanguard.[83] False alarms and fear of ambush slowed down the march as actual contacts were made with Fenian scouts. Peacocke, incidentally, was still operating on the presumption that the Fenians had returned to their original camp near the mouth of Frenchman's Creek. Nightfall, together with all this uncertainty, led Peacocke to halt the march and the force bivouacked to the south of the road just past Robert Bowen's house. A night attack by the enemy was considered quite possible and defensive measures were taken.[84]

The commanders felt certain that they had cut off the enemy force and that stiff fighting could be expected. Conflicting reports now arrived.

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80. Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*, 38.
81. Denison, *Soldiering in Canada*, 99.
82. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 43.
83. Peacocke, *loc. cit.*, 78.
84. Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*, 53.

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One stated that Colonel Lowry of the 47th Regiment had arrived at Black Creek with four field guns and a considerable body of infantry.[85] On the other hand, a telegram from Buffalo asserted that reinforcements of two to three thousand men had crossed the river to join the enemy. This latter report probably originated with the fact that a large group of Fenian reinforcements had actually boarded barges at Buffalo but were disembarked when Fenian officials decided to withdraw their expeditionary force. The first report was true and Lieut. Colonel John Hillyard Cameron, one of Lowry's officers who had detrained from the Erie and Niagara Railway at Frenchman's Creek was sent up the Bowen Road on horseback. He arrived at Peacocke's camp around 5 a.m. just as the force was about to march and he reported to Peacocke that the enemy had escaped.

The Fenian escape had been discovered by Colonel Wolseley, Lowry's staff-officer of intelligence, who, on advancing with a patrol, had detected the remnants of the Fenian force estimated at five to seven hundred men on board a large barge or canal-boat moored astern of the U.S.S. *Michigan* in the United States waters of the Niagara River.[86] Marching southward, Peacocke's force divided into two columns which then proceeded eastward on the Bertie and Garrison Roads. A long line of skirmishers searched the large woods of the Ordnance Reserve west of the ruins of Fort Erie but this was a futile gesture netting only a few stragglers.[87]

The Fenian retreat had been well executed. About 2 a.m. signals from their camp at the old fort were seen in Buffalo and two powerful tugs with a large barge which had been waiting in Buffalo Creek steamed out of the harbour and crossed the foot of the lake to the wharf of the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway.[88] The *Michigan* was still moored at Pratt's Landing more than four miles downstream and the picket boats detailed to patrol the river were not in sight. A hurried embarkation now proceded which involved the abandonment of the sick and seriously wounded with their attendants. Such was the haste that as many as 150 men who had been manning the outposts were left behind.[89] At least forty of these are said to have escaped later in small boats.

When the two tugs with their barge in tow reached midstream they were overtaken by the tug *Harrison* which was being used by General Barry as a patrol-boat. The two tugs were taken into Buffalo harbour where their passengers were put under arrest by the United States Marshal. The barge was then taken downstream and moored under the stern of the *Michigan* where the rest of the raiders remained for several

85. Charles Hunter, "Reminiscences of the Fenian Raid of 1866," *Publications of the Niagara Historical Society*, XX (1920), 17.
86. R. W. Lowry, *Official Report* (appendix of Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie*), 82.
87. Barlow Cumberland, "The Fenian Raid of 1866 and Events on the Frontier," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 3rd series, IV (1911), 94-5.
88. Chewett, *loc. cit.*, 65.
89. J. A. Macdonald, *Troublous Times in Canada*, 90.

days in considerable discomfort until permission came from Washington allowing their release on receipt of sureties that they would appear for trial. Meanwhile the commanding officer at Fort Erie had received messages both from Captain Bryson of the *Michigan* and from General Barry assuring him of their sincere intentions of preventing any repetition of these incidents.[90]

ASPECTS AND AFTERMATH

Upon reflection, there are several aspects of this invasion that are subject to considerable discussion. In Canada the alacrity of popular support and the speed with which the volunteers were transported to the front does not seem to have been balanced by sufficient foresight and organization. As already pointed out, when we consider the advanced intelligence available on this occasion it is difficult to justify the tardy call to arms. Then too, in the process of mobilization, the dispatch of the three or four groups of cavalry to the front last instead of first hampered the operations of both Peacocke's and Booker's columns. Denison gives credit for this particular oversight to, "the average stupidity of officials".[91] Booker's force was especially plagued by this poor administration which left the column with no cavalry, no artillery, no regulars, no staff, no transport, and a sincere but inexperienced commander who accidentally is raised to the rank of brigadier of what turns out to be the most important column. Perhaps the most serious single deficiency was the want of cavalry. This caused Peacocke to waste much valuable time on June 2nd and forced Booker to advance through unknown territory with open flanks.

Other blunders soon manifested themselves. The commissariat proved completely ineffectual and the troops had to rely on the charity of civilian relief committees. The scarcity of haversacks, water-bottles, camping equipment, proper clothing, and the inferior weapons and poor maps all bore further witness to an unbelievable lack of forethought.

> The lesson of Ridgeway is as old as military history; in the final analysis courage must invariably yield first place in a soldier's equipment to discipline and training.[92]

It is only by considering such weaknesses that we can come to understand why O'Neill's force of probably not more than 900 effectives, with only a few mounted scouts and virtually no supplies, was able to elude capture and even destruction.

Personalities also played a large role. Dennis has been severely criticized for his disobedience and his military bungling with regard to the handling of the *W. T. Robb* expedition.[93] Akers shares some of the blame in these matters. Yet, they were both officially exonerated by a

90. Lowry, *loc. cit.*, 83.
91. Denison, *Soldiering in Canada*, 88.
92. Stanley, *loc. cit.*, 231.
93. Denison, *Soldiering in Canada*, 102-3.

Court of Enquiry. Peacocke has been castigated for his cautious advance that never really established any contact with the Fenians. Napier has been held responsible for the lack of co-ordination existing between the various units as well as general administrative difficulties. Booker, as has already been mentioned, came in for considerable popular criticism which was furthered by deliberately falsified accounts such as that of Alexander Somerville in his *Narrative of the Fenian Invasion of Canada.*

As far as the Fenians are concerned almost all contemporary accounts are unanimous in their praise of the good conduct and even good manners of the invaders. As might be expected, panegyrics exonerating and condemning the respective sides were soon in evidence.[94] Yet, the fact remains that the Fenians performed no acts of indiscriminate destruction or pillage on their lines of march. Horses and provisions were freely requisitioned but this was to be expected. Prisoners who fell into their hands were well treated. In fact, the very abundance of such evidence is rather puzzling to the historian since it was to have been expected that a large number of border ruffians would have joined this expedition as they had those in 1838.

It is still not clear what the Fenian leaders hoped to accomplish by this particular invasion. It may well have been part of a larger plan that failed to materialize or perhaps it was a test case to check the reactions of the American government or, still further, to attempt by such an incident to embroil the British and American governments in open conflict. Perhaps too, they really had expected the people of Ontario to welcome them as liberators. At any rate the commanders in the field soon realized how hopeless this venture was and yet they still maintained good discipline and conducted their forces so as to draw only praise from those who came in contact with them.

> They have been called plunderers, robbers and marauders, yet, no matter how unwilling we may be to admit it, the positive fact remains that they stole but few valuables, that they destroyed, comparatively speaking, little or nothing, and that they committed no outrages on the inhabitants, but treated everyone with unvarying courtesy. It seems like a perfect burlesque to see a ragged rabble without a government, country or flag affecting chivalrous sentiments and doing acts that put one in mind of the days of knight-errantry.[95]

We must pass now to a treatment of the aftermath of the invasion. On June 5th the following order was finally issued to the district-attorneys and marshals by the Attorney-General of the United States:

> By direction of the President you are hereby instructed to cause the arrest of all prominent, leading, or conspicuous persons called

94. Good examples of the lampooning done by both sides will be found in: Dubh Scian (James McCarroll), *Ridgeway, An Historical Romance of the Fenian Invasion of Canada,* (Buffalo, McCarroll & Co., 1868), and Doscen Gauust, *History of the Fenian Invasion of Canada,* (Hamilton, Wm. Brown & Co., 186?).

95. Denison, *The Fenian Raid on Fort Erie,* 69.

> 'Fenians', who you may have probable cause to believe have been or may be guilty of violations of the neutrality laws of the United States.[96]

This was followed up on the succeeding day by a proclamation from President Johnson himself which warned all citizens and residents of the United States of the penalties involved in the infraction of the neutrality laws of the country. On that same day, June 6th, John O'Neill, Owen Starr, John Hoey and other leaders of the raid were arraigned in Erie County Court House in Buffalo and were released on bail of $6,000 each.[97] This was readily supplied by local sympathizers and having been released these heroes were escorted to the 'Michigan House', the best hotel in Buffalo, by an enthusiastic crowd. In response to their demands O'Neill finally made the following short speech:

> Gentlemen! You may not be aware that I am no speechmaker. The only kind of speeches I am accustomed to are such as are made from the cannon's mouth. Situated as I am at present, I can only advise you to retire to your homes, peacefully and in an orderly manner. Goodby.[98]

O'Neill left the city that night. He returned to Nashville but was later recalled to figure in further Fenian invasion plots.

On June 8th General Barry issued much more stringent orders hindering further Fenian movements. He attempted to disperse the large number of Fenians who had come to Buffalo from other sections of the country by offering free transportation to those promising to renounce all further Fenian activities. This rider provoked mob hostility and diminished the offer's effectiveness. Finally, after consultation with General Meade on June 14th unconditional transportation was offered and generally accepted by even the most ardent Fenians who returned to their homes to await the next call to arms.[99]

This invasion had serious political effects in many quarters. In Washington, President Johnson was already a fair target for post-war politicians and now he was heavily criticized by some for not acting soon enough to prevent all this from happening while others criticized him for acting at all. So violent was this protest that Johnson felt it necessary to justify his actions before Congress at the end of the year. In his address he managed to sidestep several of the critical points and asked the British government to exercise clemency in dealing with the captured Fenians.

An order of *nolle prosequi* having been issued it developed that none of the raiders was ever brought to trial in the United States. The American government also continued to show reluctance in interfering with Fenian operations until the Alabama claims had been liquidated. Consequently, Canada had to face further Fenian alarms which caused actual military preparations to be taken in March, 1867; August, 1868; and October

96. Severance, *loc. cit.*, 227.
97. Cruikshank, *loc. cit.*, 45.
98. Severance, *loc. cit.*, 278.
99. *Ibid.*, 279-80.

1869.[100] In May 1870, O'Neill commanded another invasion force which was driven back after engagements at Eccles Hill and Huntingdon in the Eastern Townships. Although arrested again he was released and in 1871 he led a final unsuccessful raid on Manitoba.

> With contemptuous hostility mingled with apprehension, Canada watched while Washington discontinued what Fenian prosecutions had been undertaken, returned the arms seized at Buffalo, removed the district attorney who had tried to enforce the neutrality laws there, and with almost insolent assurance made representations on behalf of the Fenian prisoners convicted in Canada.[101]

On the Canadian side of the Niagara River regular and volunteer units numbering close to 3,000 men had congregated by the 4th of June. This force was under Lowry's command and included the remnants of Booker's column which on June 3rd had come on from Port Colborne under Akers. A force of 2,000 troops, supplemented by swarms of sight-seers, was stationed here for the next three weeks.[102]

Along the St. Lawrence front at about this same time Kingston, Prescott, Brockville, and Cornwall all felt the pressure of Fenian alarms which seems to give further credibility to the theory that O'Neill's force was intended as only one arm of a multi-pronged attack. A Fenian force did invade Missiquoi County in the Eastern Townships on June 4th and plundered the villages of St. Armand and Freligsburg before retiring across the border. At any rate, the St. Lawrence front was well garrisoned. Fort Wellington was strengthened, the Grand Trunk Railway was guarded by militia details at Vaudreuil, St. Anne, and Lachine. Several steam vessels were chartered and fitted out as gunboats by the government and manned by naval militia and sailors from H.M.S. *Aurora*.

Many of the Fenian prisoners captured during the invasion were discharged at the preliminary hearing and deported to the United States. About forty were tried in Toronto beginning on October 8th, 1866.[103] Of these over twenty were found guilty and sentenced to hang but since all of the leaders had escaped nothing was to be gained from such severity and the sentences were commuted to life imprisonment. This decision was influenced by the advice of Britain which, in turn, was under pressure from the United States. Finally, in 1872, the six prisoners still remaining in Kingston were released.[104] The 'liberality' with which these prisoners were treated was much resented by many volunteer veterans.

In assessing the over-all significance of this Fenian invasion of 1866 we can locate it as the greatest single incident in a six year period in which Fenian agitation was the cause of genuine concern for both the government and people of Canada. This raid also illustrates how com-

100. Hamilton, "The Canadian Militia: The Fenian Raids," *loc. cit.*, 351.
101. Stacey, "Fenianism and the Rise of National Feeling," 257.
102. Akers, *Official Report, loc. cit.*, 87; Denison, *Soldiering in Canada*, 126-7.
103. G. R. Gregg and E. P. Roden, *Trials of the Fenian Prisoners at Toronto Who Were Captured at Fort Erie, C. W., in June, 1866,* (Toronto, Leader Steam Press, 1867).
104. Guillet, *loc. cit.*, 716.

pletely this menace could and did capture the popular mind. It is no wonder that rumours and fears would continue to arouse people along Canada's extensive border. That the raid demonstrated the need for co-ordinated defensive measures was only too well emphasized by similar events in New Brunswick. In the case of the province of Canada West this raid did not directly 'cause' Confederation. What it did do was perhaps even more important.

> Parliament had approved of federation before the menace became important, but had decided not to seek confirmation of its policy in the verdict of an election. Fenianism provided a most beneficial influence upon the immediate and ultimate fortunes of the project, by creating at once a popular apprehension of danger which worked strongly against any possibility of a repudiation of parliament's decision, and by engendering an atmosphere of patriotic enthusiasm eminently favourable to the success of an experiment in nation-building. All the circumstances of the Fenian flurry strengthened the forces working for a distinctive colonial nationalism, for Canada's political interests and emotions were found for a time to be opposed even to those of the mother country on some points, and entirely hostile to those of the United States, whose shadow falls so darkly across this period of Canadian history.[105]

Perhaps the greatest single consequence of the Fenian invasion of 1866 was the impetus it provided towards the formation of what was to become the modern Canadian army. The Militia Act of 1855 had been based on the retention and improvement of the old Sedentary Militia with its compulsory military service. It had also provided for a new and separate force of volunteers. These were to be uniformed, armed, and receive annual training. These Active Militia were to number not more than 5,000 as a permanent force. Yet, the principle of universal conscription was gradually to fade and these volunteers were to become the country's only military force. It was during the hectic ten years prior to Confederation that this solution was worked out as Canada's answer to her defence problem. In this pattern the raid of 1866 played a key role for as Stacey points out:

> The Fenian troubles did much to make the country volunteer-minded. The volunteer units were not ill-suited to the task of dealing with filibustering expeditions; the immediate threat of such raids led the legislature to spend more money on the force than ever before, and the young men of Canada pressed forward to enlist. In 1866 the provincial defence appropriations rose to nearly $2,000,000 and the strength of the volunteers, less than 20,000 in the spring of that year, was up to 33,750 by the end of 1867. The year 1866, when the Fenian menace reached and passed its high tide, left a permanent mark on the Canadian Army List. No less than 38 battalions of infantry and rifles, and 10 battalions of artillery were organized in that exciting twelvemonth.[106]

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105. Stacey, "Fenianism and the Rise of National Feeling," 238.

106. C. P. Stacey, *Introduction to the Study of Military History for Canadian Students*, (4th ed. rev.; Directorate of Military Training; Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1955), 15.

From a military standpoint the country had been found wanting in 1866 as far as efficiency and organization to handle a situation so similar to her experiences in 1812 and 1838. Yet the shock of Ridgeway led to the creation of training camps at Thorold and Toronto. Staff organization and equipment were improved so that, "evidence of the healthy effect upon the development of Canadian defence of the blunders and mistakes of 1866 is afforded by the efficient manner in which the troops were mobilized and disposed to meet O'Neill's invasion in 1870".[107]

In the *Globe* of March 30th, 1866, George Brown stated:

> The Fenians have unwittingly done an essential service for the Canadian people, by inspiring them with a degree of confidence which they did not before possess.[108]

The resistance to the Fenians evoked a distinctively Canadian patriotism for while the British connection was indeed at stake even more important in the popular mind was the self-defence which now made Canada rely more on her own local resources. The volunteers, for instance, received an enormous amount of publicity, they did the little fighting involved, and suffered the few casualties. The regular forces and the efforts of the British government in general were neglected as the newspapers used the raid of 1866 to work up public opinion and to foster a unique and independent national feeling. For example, three of those killed at Ridgeway were University of Toronto undergraduates and their public funeral on June 5th was the occasion for a great outburst of popular emotion which, in turn, was fully exploited by the press.

The Fenian invasion of June, 1866, reminds us of a fact that is often neglected, namely, that the principles of Confederation were taking shape in "a military atmosphere dominated by apprehensions and defensive preparations".[109] It might truly be said that a new sense of military responsibility and a new national feeling grew up together in the atmosphere of these critical months. Canada was made aware of its needs not by the combined threat of the Northern armies but by the filibustering of the Fenians whose activities reached and passed their real crisis with this invasion of June, 1866.

The old emotions of jealousy and fear with regard to the United States had been aroused once more. Yet, the people showed remarkable unanimity and spontaneity in their efforts to repel these invaders. They had been given considerable grounds for fear ever since 1864 when extremely strong but unemployed Northern armies, the increased pressures of Fenianism, and the pronounced unfriendliness of the government of the Union all focussed attention on these relatively defenceless and innocent provinces. Now, strangely enough, the people of Canada West

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107. Stanley, *loc. cit.*, 232.
108. Stacey, "Fenianism and the Rise of National Feeling," 248.
109. C. P. Stacey, "British Military Policy in Canada in the Era of Confederation," *Annual Report of the Canadian Historical Association*, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1934), 20.

and elsewhere in the British colonies came to direct their resentment not so much against the United States as against their own mother country whose laxity and carelessness had so exposed the vulnerable North American provinces to these dangers. Similarly, in England itself, a strong mood of anti-imperialism found ammunition in this situation where Britain could be humiliated by the exposed flank of her colonies. And, to add fuel to the fire, these were the same colonies that were asking for greater independence and control of their own affairs. Take these two forces together and we can see an important reason why Confederation would prove mutually acceptable to colony and motherland.

It would seem from the foregoing benefits reaped by Canada as a result of the invasion of 1866 that the Fenians are to be numbered among Canada's benefactors, at least in an indirect way. At any rate, in considering the over-all context of this Fenian invasion we must also remember that while in retrospect it proved to be by far the most serious effort launched by the Brotherhood, originally it had probably been intended as one of a series of co-ordinated attacks on other border points such as Prescott, Cornwall, and the Eastern Townships. These more grandiose plans failed to materialize except in abortive incidents that did little but help to explode the myth of the Fenian menace and left the invasion in June of 1866 as their bravest and most gallant effort.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF CANADIAN OIL COMPANIES: A CHAPTER IN CANADIAN BUSINESS HISTORY

John T. Saywell

Over fifty years ago—on December 4, 1908 to be exact—His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario signed a charter to incorporate the Canadian Oil Companies Limited. It was not a particularly memorable occasion. Surrounded by a handful of people, he went through such a ceremony several times a week. Most of the companies progressed no further, and only a piece of parchment remained to testify to someone's high hopes. The history of Canadian Oil, with its familiar White Rose emblem, was to be different, although there were times when the future looked bleak indeed. But it is not its history during the last half-century that concerns us. Behind the charter of incorporation lay a much different fifty years of history.

The story began in 1857 when James Miller Williams found petroleum and produced oil in commercial quantities near Oil Springs in Enniskillen Township. Into the region along Black Creek the migrant treasure hunters soon flooded, no longer after the gold that had taken them to California, Australia, and the Fraser River, but in search of petroleum worth as much as $10 a barrel. Before long the bustling towns of Oil Springs and Petrolia had sprung up as the centres of a new Canadian industry. Within a few years Canadian oil was known throughout the world: in the United States, where it found a ready market until the Pennsylvania wells expanded following Edwin Drake's discovery at Titusville in 1859; in England where it lighted street lamps and country homes; and in Europe where it won a variety of prizes.

In 1866 when the King wells "came in," Petrolia replaced Oil Springs as the major producing centre and, by the early 1880's, after a few temporary setbacks, overcame London's ascendancy in refining because it was closer to the supply of crude oil. The town had been well named. The local paper proudly boasted that Petrolia was the oil capital of the world. As one visitor commented: "Everything smells of oil; everything tastes of oil; everything is covered and smeared with oil; everything is oil." Everything was oil. The conversation that took place on the street-corners, in the post-office, and on the benches in front of the general store was about nothing but oil. Thousands of three-masted wells made the surrounding countryside into one gigantic oil field, while even within the town itself streets and backyards were dotted with wells. By 1875, eighteen refineries, naturally of limited capacity and primitive techniques, turned the crude into a wide variety of illuminating oils and rough greases for the buggy wheels that rutted the countryside in spring and fall.

The 1870's were critical years. The depression at home and abroad meant a shortage of capital and a contracted market. The expanding

American industry not only destroyed the markets in the United States, but also relied on its superior product and lower cost to successfully compete in Canada. Declining supplies of crude and high transportation costs destroyed the industry's competitive ability in Ontario. The small refiners began to disappear. Sale, amalgamation, and bankruptcy took their deadly toll. London refiners sought to meet increasing American competition by forming the Imperial Oil Company in 1880, and soon closed their London operation in favour of Petrolia. In the latter town only five refineries remained by 1894.

The American threat was centred in one company and in one person: Standard Oil and John D. Rockefeller. Determined to monopolize the oil industry of a continent, as well as a country, Rockefeller looked enviously on the infant Canadian industry and the possible Canadian market. By the late 1880's the tentacles of his octopus had moved across the border. Standard purchased firms, constructed plants, and secured favourable railway rates by a number of means. Early attempts to secure control of Imperial Oil failed, but by 1897 Standard was ready to take the last big step towards securing complete control of the Canadian oil industry, or at least the paramount position within it.

But first it was necessary to persuade the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier that the Canadian laws regarding the importation, transportation, and sale of oil products needed revision. Standard obviously planned to use its access to supplies of American crude and strong financial base to secure its ends. The government had to co-operate by lowering the duty on imported crude, permitting products to be imported by lake tanker, and authorizing the sale of finished products from horse-drawn tank-wagons. Thus the issue moved into the misty realm of politics, a realm in which Standard was very much at home.

Most independent Canadian producers, refiners, and retailers were opposed. John Fraser, the Member for Lambton County, told Laurier that the proposed legislation would ruin the Canadian industry. Canadians, he wrote bitterly, would be placed at the mercy of a foreign corporation, wealthy, powerful, and ruthless. There could be no Canadian competition. Standard alone had access to American crude, at a time when supplies of Canadian crude were becoming inadequate. No one but Standard had the resources to buy lake tankers and build a large fleet of tank-wagons. The protest mounted. Laurier and W. S. Fielding, the Minister of Finance, were flooded with petitions. Whether the cabinet seriously debated the merits of fostering a protected industry one cannot discover. At any rate the protests were in vain. After a long and heated debate in the Commons in June, 1897, the legislation was passed lowering the duties and permitting import by tanker, although tank-wagon delivery had to wait another two years.

Standard had won. The entire history of the oil industry in Canada was henceforth determined. In 1898 Standard took over the Imperial

Oil Company, combined all its Canadian affiliates under the Imperial label, and soon controlled (or forced the closure of) all the other refineries in Canada. As the official Mines Report of 1899 stated: "The petroleum industry of Canada is now practically controlled by one corporation, which is understood to be a branch of the American industry." An American newspaper informed its readers that Standard had an "absolute monopoly" in Canada. By the end of 1898 Imperial moved its operation to Sarnia, where American crude and refined products could be shipped by tanker or barge, although a pipeline was built to bring some crude from the Petrolia fields. As for Petrolia, the one-time oil capital of the world, it began to look like the ghost towns that have forever dotted the trail of the treasure seekers. Yet it was from this ghost town that the Canadian Oil Companies was to emerge.

Standard's invasion was at once felt throughout the country. The price of Canadian crude fell. Dependent on a single market Canadian producers were insecure and impotent. Retailers were insecure and fearful. Purchasers of refined products felt the noose tighten. Typical of the many meetings was one held in Toronto in February 1899 by the leaders of seventeen large companies, among them Massey-Harris, the Domínion Bridge of Montreal, and the Dominion Glass of Hamilton. All had switched from coal to oil as the oil industry had expanded. Finding themselves the captive of a monopoly they regretted their action. After lengthy discussions a bitter letter was sent to the Prime Minister stating that, "since the Standard Oil Company secured the control of the product there has been a tendancy to curtail the supply and reduce the quality, and in fact in some cases to cut it off altogether, as well as advance the price materially." Prairie farmers complained vigorously in letters and in the House of Commons against the rising cost of kerosene. Delegations marched on Ottawa to lay the case before the government. It was all in vain.

In Petrolia the citizens had shaken off the pessimism and gloom that had followed the exodus and closing of the refineries. Leading crude producers like James McCort and prominent citizens, such as E. E. Grant, John Kerr, and banker W. D. Ross, contacted other businessmen who were either interested in the oil industry or in a good investment. Among them were T. H. Hamilton of Toronto, one of Kerr's close friends, director of an independent retailing company whose future was hopeless if Standard chose to move in, W. S. Calvert, a well-to-do Member of Parliament from Strathroy, Simon Dyment, prosperous Barrie lumberman, and Dyment's friends, W. Perkins Bull and W. J. Lovering of Toronto. Each for his own reasons wanted an oil company independent of Standard. And the centre of such a company, they realized, must be a refinery. A local refinery would purchase Petrolia crude and would give the independent retailers and private purchasers a second source of supply.

The group either did not have, or was not prepared to gamble, sufficient capital to begin the new venture. Moreover, it was quite certain that the local wells could not supply a large refinery. Salvation came from the same source as the nemesis, the United States. Desperately trying to stay alive in the face of Standard's onslaught, some Americans felt that it would be to their advantage to band together with the Canadians. High Jamieson and W. D. Todd were Philadelphia refiners with considerable experience. R. G. Stitt of Titusville owned the Stitt Oil Company of Toledo and had access to crude if the Canadian wells were inadequate. The arrangements were quickly made, in the back room of John Kerr's store it has been said. Early in July, 1901, the *Petrolia Advertiser* picked up a rumour that there soon would be a refinery in the town. Three weeks later it reported that property had been purchased. And on August 7, 1901 a charter was granted to the Canadian Oil Refining Company of Petrolia.

Construction started at once and on November 6, 1901 foreman Frank Riddell, who had been in the Petrolia oil industry for twenty years, started the works going. Petrolia once again had its refinery, a refinery that was to remain in operation for fifty-five years and which in 1908 was to produce the first White Rose products ever seen or used in Canada. The McCort Oil Company was to act as the crude purchaser for the refinery. Crude was bought locally as well as shipped in from Toledo by tank-car, and negotiations were completed with independent retailers to handle the finished product.

The struggle for survival had really just begun. Standard could easily have crushed the offending infant had it chosen. The company had to expand to stay alive. The opportunity for expansion was present. Scattered across the country were many small retailing companies engaged in selling oil products, none of them strong enough to withstand a serious challenge when Standard chose — if it chose — to make its retailing monopoly airtight. One hard-pressed retailer told Laurier that if he continued to sell independently he had been promised that "Le Trust would sit down on me, eh bien!" Two weeks later he ruefully added that the Trust had lived up to its promise and that he was out of business. Unless there was effective action the story would be repeated countless times.

Two years of seemingly endless correspondence, anxious discussions, and protracted negotiations followed. Finally, in March, 1904, Toronto newspapers reported a proposed million dollar merger of a number of independent oil companies, including the four largest independents then operating in Canada. And on April 4 a charter was granted to the Canadian Oil Company Limited with head offices in Toronto and a capitalization of one million dollars. Of the nine firms the most important was the Canadian Oil Refining Company whose Petrolia refinery was to be the heart of the new corporation. Head office was in the old quarters of the

Grant Hamilton Oil Company of Toronto, which possessed extensive marketing outlets in Ontario. A third, the Sun Oil Refining Company, was a marketing agent for a Philadelphia concern and carried on no refining in Canada. Its chief value was that it had retail outlets in the Maritimes and thus gave the new organization an extended base. The Union Petroleum Company, founded in Petrolia in 1902 by an amalgamation of several small retail and producing companies, was partially financed by the same Americans who controlled Sun Oil. By 1904 it had distributing facilities as far as Winnipeg and Vancouver. A purely western firm, the Walker Oil Company of Winnipeg, was brought into the merger to strengthen Canadian Oil's competitive position in the prairies.

Quebec markets were secured by the entry of the Gall-Schneider Company of Montreal, the largest independent in the province. McCort Oil of Petrolia—producer, shipper, and crude purchaser—retained its connection with the new concern. Greater strength and stability were found in the addition of the Sterling Oil Works, which owned a refinery at Marietta, Ohio, and could therefore supplement the Petrolia output. Likewise, the Sun Oil group, with which R. G. Stitt of Toledo was connected, could guarantee an adequate supply of crude.

The new company was a joint Canadian-American undertaking. National barriers were overlooked in the effort to withstand the threat from Standard. Many of the founding fathers were Canadian: Kerr of Petrolia, Hamilton and George Grant of Toronto, Dyment from Barrie, James Playfair, an influential Midland lumberman, and the wealthy Calvert. Hamilton was first general manager and Calvert the first president. Todd, Jamieson, and Stitt were the prominent Americans.

Even this new base was not sufficient. Costs rose as more and more crude had to be imported. To offset high transportation rates the company purchased a tanker in 1906—originally the *W. S. Calvert*, but later called the *En-Ar-Co*—to carry crude from Toledo to Froomfield on the St. Clair River, whence a two-inch pipeline carried it the remaining sixteen miles to the refinery. More money was needed to expand the retail outlets, to enlarge and modernize the refinery, to build a fleet of horse-drawn wagons, to employ a host of urban and rural salesmen, and to advertise the product. The banks were sympathetic, but little more. The company went into debt and with the recession of 1907 was unable to pay the men's wages and had to close the refinery.

The plight of the company had been observed by a large American concern. The National Refining Company of Cleveland had been formed on a borrowed shoestring by J. I. Lamprecht in 1884 and had become one of Standard's most determined and ingenious competitors. On a smaller scale Lamprecht, a financial wizard, and his aggressive and resourceful assistant, Frank Fretter, had emulated Rockefeller. National owned wells, pipelines, refineries, and had a network of retail outlets from Ohio to the Dakotas, from the Deep South to the Canadian border. What could

be more natural than continued northern expansion? National had experience and capital, supplies of crude and refined products. Discussions began in the autumn of 1908 and by November an agreement had been reached. For $400,000 National secured control of the company, although just under half of the common stock remained in Canadian hands. (Then valueless the stock is now worth several hundred dollars after splitting and so on.) On December 4, Sir John S. Hendrie sealed the charter of incorporation.

The sequel is interesting. Canadian Oil grew and flourished as the country grew and flourished. Many readers will remember the familiar "boy and the slate" sign of the 1920's and 1930's; that of April 9, 1937, for example, "plump women are often penny wise and pound foolish"; or of April 16, "girls with dreamy eyes often lose lots of sleep." Yet both in the United States and in Canada National fell behind the times. Dependent in great part on a rural market the company did not organize its operations to maintain a competitive position in the cities and on the highways as the automobile came more and more to dominate the industry. The management of the Canadian operations was hamstrung by American indifference and watched uneasily as the entire National operation began to crumble. Piece after piece was broken off and sold. Finally, in December, 1938, the Canadian branch was sold to the well-known Montreal financial house, Nesbitt, Thomson and Company. The new president was John Irwin, who had built up the McColl-Frontenac Oil Company. Control of the company was completely in Canadian hands and only a few shares were held in the United States. In 1952 Canadian Oil opened a new refinery at Sarnia and closed its Petrolia operations, including some still-producing wells. Three years later it purchased Anglo-Canadian, an important western producer, and became the only all-Canadian integrated oil company. For nationalists at least the story had a happy ending.

THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Ontario Historical Society was organized on September 4, 1888 under the title of 'The Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario' and adopted its present name in 1898. Its object is to develop the study of history, particularly that of Ontario.

Beginning in 1899 a volume of *Papers & Records* has been published nearly every year. These volumes, I to XXXIX, contain a vast amount of information about the history of the Province. Several volumes now are out of print, but the rest are available at $4 per cloth-bound volume and $2 for those with paper covers. In 1947 the name of the publication was changed to *Ontario History* and since the beginning of 1949 it has appeared in quarterly form. *Ontario History* is sent free to all members, and issues of previous years are available at $1 per number or $3 per volume of four issues. Several special volumes of documentary material also are available, including the first four volumes of the Ontario Local Histories Series, "The Valley of the Trent" by E. C. Guillet; "Royal Fort Frontenac" by R. A. Preston and L. Lamontagne; "Kingston Before the War of 1812" by R. A. Preston; "The Windsor Border Region" by E. J. Lajeunesse, C.S.B.—each $3.50 to members.

General meetings of the Society have been held annually in various centres in the province. These meetings have enabled members to meet with others who are particularly interested in local provincial history, and to visit many of the historic spots in Ontario.

The several classes of membership are: corporate, $3 a year, sustaining $10 a year, family $5, and annual, $3. Life memberships are $50. Membership is open to all societies and individuals interested in the history of Ontario. Fees should be sent to the Secretary-Treasurer, 27 Surrey Place, Toronto 5.

The Executive Committee is: President, Mr. A. David McFall, Toronto; First Vice-President, Mr. Andrew W. Taylor, Galt; Second Vice-President, Miss Kaye McFarland, Napanee; Secretary-Treasurer, Miss Edna Ash, 27 Surrey Place, Toronto 5; Immediate Past-President, Professor J. M. S. Careless, Toronto; Additional Members — Miss Mary Farmer, Hamilton; Mr. John M. Gray, Toronto; Miss Adeline Hanna, Niagara Falls; Mr. Charles Humphries, Toronto; Mrs. Gordon Lapp, Port Credit; Mr. W. H. E. Schmalz, Kitchener.

HISTORICAL SOCIETIES AND MUSEUMS IN ONTARIO

affiliated with The Ontario Historical Society

27 Surrey Place, Toronto 5.

Ancaster Twp. Historical Society. Sec., Mrs. R. M. Saunders, Box 415, Ancaster.
Brant Historical Society. Sec., Mr. H. W. Hill, 17 Hawarden Avenue, Brantford.
Bruce County Historical Museum. Sec.-Treas., Mrs. T. J. Cornish, Box 446, Chesley.
Bruce County Historical Society. Sec., Mrs. George Downey, Eskdale Farms, Tiverton.
Dufferin Area Historical Association. Sec., Mrs. Russell Turnbull, Mono Centre.
Dundas Historical Society. Sec., Mrs. H. H. Pirie, 133 Park St. West, Dundas.
Essex County Historical Association. Sec., Mr. Gordon F. Mann, Board of Education, 451 Park Street West, Windsor.
Etobicoke Historical Society. Sec.-Treas., Mr. E. W. Anderson, 14 Delroy Drive, Toronto 18.
Essex Historical Society.
Fenelon Falls and District Historical Society. Corr.-Sec'y, Miss Bessie Nie, Fenelon Falls.
Fort Erie Historical Society. Cor. Sec., Mrs. S. H. Raymond, 17 Queen Street, Fort Erie.
Grey County Historical and Art Society. Sec., William McLernon, 994 First Ave. East, Owen Sound.
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Head-of-the-Lake Historical Society. Sec., Miss Mary H. Farmer, 83 Charlton Avenue West, Hamilton, Ontario.
Hastings County Historical Society. Sec., Miss Helen Fraleck, 113 Moira St. West, Belleville.
Hiram Walker Historical Museum. Curator, Mr. R. Alan Douglas, 254 Pitt St. West, Windsor.
Historical Society of Ottawa Sec., Miss Mabel M. Stewart, 465 Tweedsmuir Ave., Ottawa.
Huron Institute.
Huronia Historic Sites and Tourist Association. Sec., Mr. J. R. Chittick, 236 King Street, Midland.
Jordan Historical Museum of the Twenty. Sec., Barbara Coffman, Jordan.
Kent Historical Society. Sec.-Treas., Mrs. James Huff, R.R. 5, Chatham.
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London and Middlesex Historical Society. Sec., Miss Alice McFarlane, 846 Colborne Street, London, Ont.
Lundy's Lane Historical Society. Sec.-Treas., Miss Adeline Hanna, 1736 Woodland Blvd., Niagara Falls, Ontario.
Macnab Historical Association. Pres., Mr. William MacNab, Box 962, Sudbury.
Niagara Historical Society. Miss Marjorie Ball, Box 208, Niagara-on-the-Lake.
Norfolk Historical Society. Sec.-Treas., Miss Grace King, 63 Elgin Avenue, Simcoe.
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Oakville Historical Society. C-o Mrs. Dorothy Denison, 291 Balsam Dr., Oakville.
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